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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Crossroads Cafe program, an instructional program for adults that promotes a nontraditional learning environment with limited intervention by a professional teacher. It studied 475 limited-English-proficient (LEP) adult learners using Crossroads Cafe videotapes and text materials under field conditions for at least 13 weeks at 10 different sites across New York State. The instructional materials included 26 half hour videos supported by textbooks and other ancillary materials. The learners were pre-tested and then randomly assigned to one of three learning conditions: distance learners, LEP adults who worked at home with videos and text materials and had occasional telephone and mail contact with a teacher; hybrid learners, who worked at home like distance learners but also met weekly or biweekly with a teacher; and controls, LEP adults who did not participate in any formal English language learning program during the experimental period. Of the LEP adults, 57.5% returned for post-testing. The research questions included the following: Did the hybrid and distance groups perform significantly better than the control group? Did either the hybrid or distance group score significantly higher than the other on these tests? Ancillary questions inquired if in general any group felt much more confident or capable in English. General conclusions were that both the hybrid and distance learners achieved significantly more robust gains than the control group, though not significantly different scores from one another. Listening gains were less impressive. This report provides substantial quantitative data backing up its conclusions, including numerous charts, figures, and diagrams. (Contains 22 references.) (KFT)

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ED 441 353

CROSSROADS CAFÉ

Impact Evaluation Study

October 1999

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The authors also want to thank Dr. Ronald S. Pugsley, Director of the Division of Adult Education and Literacy of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, US Office of Education, for his continued enthusiasm for our work, for his eternal optimism, and for his helpful guidance and patience. The role played by Dr. Blair A. Rudes of Research Associates, Inc, now a professor of linguistics at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, was instrumental at every stage of our research. His expertise as a researcher and his commitment to coordinating the federal study with the NYS undertaking enriched and strengthened the findings of both.

The contributions of the participating provider agencies were vital to the project. Teachers and administrators at each site assumed responsibilities and duties far beyond those of normal program operations. Their willingness to share their experiences and their professionalism in carrying out the detailed protocols of the research made them the heroes and heroines of the undertaking. At each experimental site, the instructors became enthusiastic contributing members of our research family. Their cooperation, hard work, and commitment to the research effort went beyond expectations and are deeply appreciated by the authors.

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As in all research projects, the conclusions drawn here are those of the authors only.

Table of Contents

Section **Page**

- Abstract
- List of Graphic Presentations i
- List of Tables iii

Crossroads Café Impact Evaluation Study

- Purpose 1
- Need for Expansion of ESOL Services 2
- What Is Crossroads Café? 4
- Research History 6
  - Relationship between the State Study and the Federal study 7
- Research Questions 7
- How Was the Study Conducted? 8
  - Impact Study Advisory Committee 8
  - Experimental and Control Conditions Defined 9
- Non-Traditional Learning Strategies 10
- Use of the BEST and CASAS Battery 11
- Which Were the Participating Sites? 13
- Duration of the Experiment 14
- Who Were the Instructors? 14
- Teacher Training 15
- Limited English Proficient (LEP) Adults 16
- The Benefits of English Language Instruction 17
- Student Attrition 18
- Design and Procedure 19
  - Experimental Protocols 20
  - Student Orientation 21
  - Measurement Tools 22
- Instrumentation 22
  - Initial Student Background Information Form 22
  - Student Logs 23
  - Teacher Logs 23
  - Follow-up Student Background Information Form 24
  - Teacher's Background Information Form 24
- Tests Employed in the Study 24
  - Basic English Skills Test (BEST) 24
  - Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) 26
- Results 29
  - Data Collection 29
  - Adherence to the Protocol 30

Characteristics of Pre-Tested Subjects 31
Student Retention 33
    Retention and Associated Factors 36
    Focus Group Insights 38
    Retained Student Descriptors 39
Test Results 43
    BEST and CASAS Reading Scores 43
    Student Performance Levels Defined 44
    BEST, CASAS, and SPL Scores 44
    CASAS Listening 45
Time in the Study 47
    Gains Based upon Pre-Test CASAS Levels 51
    Teacher Ratings 52
    Correlations between Teacher Evaluations and Test Scores 54
    Student Ratings 56
Studying Behaviors 59
    Time on Task 59
Problems That Interfered with Studying 63
Choice of Partners and Family Literacy 63
Post-Test Data Collection 65
Discussion 68
    Program Accessibility and Achievement 69
    Assignment to Condition 69
    Study Population 69
Outcomes 70
Conclusions 72
    Standardized Test Results 73
    Teacher and Student Ratings 73
    Implications for Family Literacy 74

List of Attachments

Graphic Presentations 75
References and Bibliography 123
Appendix A: Teacher Training Manual
Appendix B: Protocols
Appendix C: SPL Definitions
Appendix D: Forms

CROSSROADS CAFÉ IMPACT STUDY

ABSTRACT

Purpose

The Impact Study sought to establish the effectiveness of the *Crossroads Café* program by studying limited English proficient (LEP) adult learners using *Crossroads Café* videos and text materials under field conditions for a period of at least 13 weeks at 10 different sites across New York State. *Crossroads Café*, an instructional program for adult learners who lack English language proficiency, promotes a non-traditional learning environment with limited intervention by a professional teacher. The instructional materials include twenty-six highly professional half-hour video episodes supported by textbooks and other ancillary materials.

Conditions

For the study, 475 limited English proficient (LEP) adults participated in an orientation session, were tested either on the Literacy Skills section of the *Basic English Skills Test* (BEST) or the reading and listening comprehension sections of the *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System* (CASAS), and then randomly assigned to one of three learning conditions:

1) Distance Learners — LEP adults who essentially worked at home with the videos and text materials, except for regular telephone and mail contact with a teacher,

2) Hybrid Learners — LEP adults who reviewed their work with a teacher present weekly or bi-weekly, but viewed the videos and completed the text material at home, and

3) Controls — LEP adults who did not participate in any formal English language study program during the experimental period.

All adult learners were to be pre and post-tested. They completed demographic and personal history questionnaires at the orientation and final sessions of the program. All received stipends of $25 at their pre-testing session and were promised $35 at post-testing 26 weeks later. At the conclusion of the study, 273 (57.5%) of the LEP adults returned for post-testing.

Research Questions

The Impact Study was designed to answer two primary research questions by comparing pre and post-test scores and survey data collected from experimental and control groups:

- Did the hybrid and distance groups perform significantly better than the control group on the BEST, CASAS Reading and CASAS Listening tests?
- Did either the hybrid or distance groups score significantly higher than the other on these tests?

Other ancillary questions were posed such as: Do *Crossroads Café* students feel that they understand more English language radio and television? Are they more comfortable speaking English on the telephone? Are they more confident using their English language skills? Have their job situations changed?

Findings — Test Scores

Analysis of pre and post-test achievement data from the reading components of the BEST and the CASAS Battery, as well as Student Performance Level (SPL) analyses, documented significant and robust gains in performance by *Crossroads Café* learners when compared with gains attained by controls during the same period. No differences in reading achievement were found between the hybrid and distance conditions. On average, *Crossroads Café* learners gained almost twice as many points as controls on the BEST (11 versus 6) and a little more than twice as many points as controls on the CASAS Reading (10 versus 4.5). On the Student Performance Level scale (SPL), *Crossroads Café* learners gained approximately twice as much as controls, 1.19 to 0.56 SPL's.

Listening test gains were less robust. Nonetheless, overall hybrid and distance learners scored higher on the post listening test than did controls; but only for the distance condition was there a statistically significant difference. However, those hybrid and distance LEP adults who remained in the program for the full cycle of study attained post-test scores significantly higher than did controls.

Findings — Corroborative Data

Teacher ratings of students' understanding and verbal expression, students' assessments of improvements in their own communications and every day life skills, and the students' reports of changes in their employment also reinforce the conclusion that *Crossroads Café* is an effective educational intervention for LEP adults under the experimental conditions.

During the experimental period, approximately 25% of the members of all groups acquired new jobs or received raises or promotions. They consistently felt that their new jobs were better than their previous jobs. However, hybrid and distance learners more frequently attributed these positive events to improved English language skills than did controls. At post-testing, hybrid and distance learners also gave significantly higher ratings and more pronounced improvement assessments to their own comfort levels in using English on the phone and listening to English language radio than did controls.

Implications for Family Literacy Initiatives

Analysis of the data revealed extensive use of *Crossroads Café* in learning situations involving family members, especially children. An unexpected advantage offered by *Crossroads Café* may be its use in family literacy initiatives. Based upon these data, further investigation is warranted for considering the use of *Crossroads Café* as an important intervention in the effort to develop full family literacy.

List of Graphic Presentations

Number	Title	Page
Figure 1:	ESOL Teaching Experience	75
Figure 2:	Learning Activities Prior to Crossroads — Retained Students	76
Figure 3:	National Origin of Pre-Tested Students	77
Figure 4:	First Language of Pre-Tested Students	78
Figure 5:	Years of Formal Education before Emigrating	79
Figure 6:	Pre-Tested Students by Age	80
Figure 7:	Pre-Test Distribution by Condition	81
Figure 8:	Retention: Urban, Suburban, Rural	82
Figure 9:	Distribution of Retained Students by Years of Education	83
Figure 10:	Retention by Years of Formal Education	84
Figure 11:	Distribution of Retained Students by National Origin	85
Figure 12:	Distribution by Language of Retained Students	86
Figure 13:	Post-Test Distribution by Condition	87
Figure 14:	Student Retention Rates by Age	88
Figure 15:	Distribution of Retained Students by Age	89
Figure 16:	Residence in the USA in Months	90
Figure 17:	Months at Current Residence	91
Figure 18:	English Spoken Daily by Students	92
Figure 19:	Percent of Pre-Test Students Not Needing to Speak English	93
Figure 20:	Days per Week Read English Language Newspaper	94
Figure 21:	Retained Learners' Employment Pattern	95
Figure 22:	Years at Current Job	96
Figure 23:	Reasons Cited for Studying English	97
Figure 24:	Post-Test Adjusted Means — BEST	98
Figure 25:	Post-Test Adjusted Means — CASAS Reading	99
Figure 26:	BEST Reading Mean Point Gains	100
Figure 27:	CASAS Reading Mean Point Gains	101

Figure 28: Post-Test Adjusted Means — CASAS and BEST SPL's 102
Figure 29: Student Performance Level (SPL) Gains 103
Figure 30: CASAS Listening Unadjusted Mean Point Gains 104
Figure 31: CASAS Reading Test Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration 105
Figure 32: CASAS Listening Test Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration 106
Figure 33: Unadjusted Mean Gains in CASAS Reading by Initial Proficiency Level 107
Figure 34: Mean Ratings by Teachers of Students' Understanding of Videos 108
Figure 35: Mean Ratings by Teachers of Students' Verbal Expression 109
Figure 36: Coefficient of Correlation between Teachers' Ratings and Pre and Post Test Scores 110
Figure 37: Unadjusted Mean Gains of Student Ratings of Telephone Comfort Level 111
Figure 38: Unadjusted Mean Gains of Student Ratings of Radio/TV Listening Comfort 112
Figure 39: Post-Test Student Ratings of Confidence in English Usage 113
Figure 40: Students' Perceived Mean Gains in English Proficiency 114
Figure 41: Mean Student-Teacher Contact Minutes by Log 115
Figure 42: Problems Interfering with Studying — All Students 116
Figure 43: Percent of Students Reported Watching with Families by Log ... 117
Figure 44 Total Responses All 5 Logs Percent of Students Watching Videos with Families 118
Figure 45: Partner Selection by Hybrid Students 119
Figure 46: Partner Selection by Distance Learners 120
Figure 47: Choice of Partner — All Students 121
Figure 48: Employment Changes Attributed by Students to Improved English 122

List of Tables

TITLE ***PAGE***

Table 1: Participating Sites and Their Characteristics 13

Table 2: Retention Rates by Test, Pre-Test Means, and Condition 33

Table 3: Unadjusted Mean Gains Reading and Listening All Conditions 47

Table 4: CASAS Reading Test Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration 48

Table 5: CASAS Listening Test Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration 49

Table 6: Coefficient of Correlation between Teachers' Ratings
and Pre and Post Test Scores 54

Table 7: Multiple Correlations of Perceived Comfort Levels 57

Table 8: Correlations between Students' Self Assessment
and Teacher Ratings — Post-Test 59

Crossroads Café Impact Evaluation Study

Crossroads Café Impact Evaluation Study

October 31, 1999

Purpose

This report presents the findings, the research protocols employed, a review of the data collected, and a description of the statistical analyses performed as part of the *Crossroads Café* Impact Study for which data collection began in March 1998 and concluded in July 1999. Funded by a grant from the New York State Education Department, this Impact Study was undertaken by the Center for Advanced Study in Education (CASE) of the City University of New York Graduate School to determine the effectiveness of the *Crossroads Café* instructional materials in strengthening the English language skills of adults with limited English proficiency when used in non-traditional learning modes.

As part of the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) commitment to the development of a strong distance learning adult education program, New York State, along with Florida, Illinois, and California, entered into a public-private partnership with INTELECOM of Pasadena, California, and with the Heinle and Heinle Publishing Company to develop the *Crossroads Café* program. Designed specifically for use by adults with limited access to professional instructors, *Crossroads Café* employs sophisticated video and text materials to teach English in both hybrid and distance learning modes.

This Impact Study was undertaken following an earlier formative study[1] for which data was collected from twenty-four (24) experienced professional ESOL instructors and seven hundred fifty-five (755) adult limited English proficient (LEP) students at twenty-two (22) sites through a six week summer period in rural, suburban, and urban areas of New

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[1] Spiegel and Rayman, 1997

York State. The analysis of the collected data revealed a strong positive subjective assessment of the effectiveness and the ease of implementation of the *Crossroads Café* materials by students, instructors, and program administrators. Partly as the result of the favorable findings of the limited formative study, this Impact Study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of *Crossroads Café* over twenty-six weeks, a period more likely to reveal a measurable impact of the materials on the English language proficiency of the Impact Study's subjects.

Need for Expansion of ESOL Services[2]

The United States is a nation of immigrants, admitting as many legal immigrants and refugees annually as are admitted by all other countries combined. In 1997, the foreign born population of the United States, 25.8 million people or 9.7 percent of the total population, was larger than at any other time in our country's history. During the decade of the 1980's, approximately twelve million legal and undocumented immigrants — a record number — entered the country, accounting for one-third of the population growth during that period.[3]

In the United States, among the immigrant population of approximately 25.8 million, approximately half have serious difficulties with English. The 1990 Census reported that 25.5 million adults, 18 years or over, in this country speak a language other than English at home and, of these, an estimated 12 million cannot speak, understand, or write English without difficulty. Consequently, they are unable to participate fully in American society because they lack proficiency in English.

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[2] Source: NYS Education Department, Office of Workforce Preparation and Continuing Education, Albany, New York, 1996, except as cited otherwise.

[3] *The Newest New Yorkers 1990-1994*, NYC Department of City Planning, 1996, p. 4.

For the decade of the 1990's, current projections estimate a one-third increase in American immigration, bringing the total immigrant population by the year 2000 to more than 35 million in a nation of 276 million (12.7%). Two-thirds of these migrants (66.7%) currently reside in only six states.[4] Of these, approximately 17.4 million qualify as Limited English Proficient (LEP) adults warranting ESOL instruction. Demographers expect that by the year 2000, half of the nation's ten largest metropolitan areas will have majority populations whose native language is not English.[5]

In an effort to accommodate this burgeoning LEP population, ESOL education has now become the fastest growing sector of adult education in the United States. Spurred on by the Adult Education Act (AEA) amendment of 1990, the number of ESOL programs serving the LEP population increased almost 200 percent in the decade from 1985 to 1995. Nonetheless, demand for ESOL instruction continues to exceed current service delivery capacity, and this shortfall is expected to continue well into the foreseeable future.

Today, because of limited federal, state, and local budget allocations, classrooms are overcrowded, funding is inadequate, and waiting lists are long. Although a substantial number of people — approximately 2.3 million — attended ESOL classes in 1997 in the United States, this figure represents only 13.2 percent of the 17.4 million people who currently require English language instruction.

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[4] U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Popclock," September 1999.

[5] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, March 1997

New York State is second in the nation, exceeded only by California, with regard to the percentage of its population that is foreign born (19.6%) and its actual number of LEP adults who would benefit from ESOL instruction.[6] Although enrollments in New York State ESOL programs have increased dramatically – by more than 73 percent in the past decade – ESOL services during that period reached only 633,000 out of approximately 4.25 million New Yorkers in need.[7]

What is *Crossroads Café*?

Crossroads Café is an instructional program for adult learners who seek to improve their English language proficiency. The program promotes non-traditional learning opportunities for gaining English language proficiency with limited intervention by a professional teacher. The program offers materials that are designed to capture the interest of new Americans in an entertaining and informative format through the presentation of twenty-six highly professional half-hour video episodes. These videos are supported by textbooks and other ancillary materials for use by limited English proficient (LEP) adults and by non-professional helpers of their own choosing.

Crossroads Café incorporates features designed to meet the individual needs of a broad array of adult learners:

- A flexible multi-level approach. *Crossroads Café* print materials are designed to meet the needs of learners at low-beginning through high-intermediate levels of English. Learners work progressively by using the same video series and *Worktext* at each successive level.

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[6] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Language Use and English Ability, Persons 18 Years and Older, by State: 1990 Census*

[7] NYS Education Department, Office of Adult and Continuing Education

- Context-based learning. *Crossroads Café* story-lines portray situations that are relevant and meaningful to a foreign-born population based on the premise that the importance of language to learners is determined by the situations in which language is used.

- Self-instructional methods. The collateral print materials were designed for independent learners who might not have access to more traditional ESOL classes. To ensure that print materials are user friendly, technical language is avoided. Self-checks and an associated answer key are provided for each unit. Students are encouraged to work with partners.

- Communication skills. The materials enable users to develop communication skills by focusing first on the purpose of communication and then on the forms of communication, both written and spoken.

- Facilitation of different life styles. Activities are designed to appeal to different kinds of learners. For example, those who prefer exercises that elicit more objective "right-or-wrong" answers may complete the fill-in-the-blank or matching questions on sentence sequencing or on reading comprehension. Others may prefer the activities that elicit self-expression, the development of fluency, the development of meta-cognitive skills, or reflection on the learning process.

The *Crossroads Café ESOL Adult Learning Program* consists of five major components:

Video — The main component is a series of 26 half-hour video episodes that provide education through entertainment. The videos, which are closed-captioned, portray the story of six ethnically diverse characters whose lives intersect at *Crossroads Café*, a neighborhood restaurant. Each video episode contains two imbedded instructional segments that are directly related to the episode's theme:

- *Wordplay*, which demonstrates a specific language function (e.g., expressing a person's ability to do something) and the language structures necessary to express that function (e.g., can, know how to).

- *Culture Clips*, a documentary style segment, which examines issue-oriented social or cultural themes that are dramatized in the story.

- **Worktext** — Twenty-six units contain exercises designed to develop story comprehension, language skills, and higher order thinking for intermediate level learners. Three graduated levels of exercises are provided, including high beginning (focusing on words and phrases), low intermediate (focusing on phrases and sentences), and high intermediate (focusing on discourse and paragraphs).

- **Photo Stories** — Simple dialogue balloons and four color photographs present a condensed pictorial tour of each episode for lower level learners.

- **Teacher Resource Package** – To maximize the benefits of the program, two resource books are available for teachers which include general instructions on instructional methods, episode-specific suggestions for optional enrichment activities, and fifty-two reproducible masters that provide interactive work opportunities for students in a hybrid or distance learning program.

- **Partner Guide** – A step-by-step manual that is designed for a non-professional aide or English proficient friend or family member to help the adult learner learn English.

Research History

Although piloted as recently as 1995[8] and initially distributed in 1996, *Crossroads Café* has already been subjected to several preliminary studies. Johnston and colleagues and Brzezinski and Leitner (1996) quantitatively and qualitatively tested the effectiveness of using several teaching models for *Crossroads Café* over a short course of study in highly controlled conditions. Findings indicated that all students learned using *Crossroads Café* regardless of delivery model, and all liked the course and course materials. McLean (1997) reviewed management and training concerns regarding the implementation of *Crossroads Café* and offered recommendations. Spiegel and Rayman (1997) qualitatively studied implementation models and surveyed administrator, teacher, and student responses to *Crossroads Café*. In that study, administrators described *Crossroads Café* program models as relatively easy to establish, and teachers reported that students spent more time "on task." However, these studies reported small sample sizes, short durations, limited sampling of the materials, and an absence of comparison groups; therefore, any assessment of program effectiveness based upon these findings is inconclusive.[9]

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[8] Johnston, Brzezinski and Stites, 1996

[9] Rudes and Stempleski, 1997

Relationship between the State Study and the Federal Study

The New York State *Crossroads Café* Impact Study was designed to parallel closely the "Pilot Test of the Impact Evaluation of the *Crossroads Café* Program" conducted by Dr. Blair Rudes, principal investigator at Development Associates, Inc., under contract with the U.S. Department of Education.[10] To ensure uniformity of practice in both state and federal research projects, to broaden the experimental data base, and to facilitate later comparative analysis of findings, close collaboration was maintained with Dr. Rudes through the duration of the Impact Study.

Sharing information with the *Crossroads Café* federal program, researchers facilitated both studies. As a member of the New York State Impact Study Advisory Committee since its inception, Dr. Rudes provided expertise in research design, in data collection form construction, and in determining questionnaire format. These materials, developed by CASE for the state Impact Study, were also incorporated into the federal study protocols. Dr. Rudes' team also benefitted from CASE's New York State experience derived from the formative study[11] and from the CASE Impact Study's early findings.

Research Questions

This Impact Study was designed to establish the effectiveness of *Crossroads Café* by studying a relatively large sample of adult learners under field conditions for a period up to twenty-six weeks, by employing most of the *Crossroads Café* support materials, and by comparing pre and post-test results of hybrid and distance learning groups with data collected from control groups.

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[10] Rudes, Zehler, Hopstock and Stephenson, 1999

[11] Spiegel and Rayman, 1997

The Impact Study was designed to answer two primary research questions:

- Did the hybrid and distance groups perform better than the control group on the BEST and CASAS Reading and CASAS Listening Tests?
- Did either the hybrid or the distance groups score significantly higher than the other on these tests?

A number of other ancillary questions were posed:

- ○ Is time on task a predictor of student achievement? Did time on task change as the course continued?
- ○ What is the relationship between amount of teacher contact and student performance?
- ○ Do *Crossroads Café* students feel that they understand more English language radio and television following their *Crossroads* experience? Are they now more comfortable speaking English on the telephone? Are they now more confident using their English language skills?
- ○ Did their job situations change either during or after their *Crossroads* experience?

How Was the Study Conducted?

Impact Study Advisory Committee[12]

An Impact Study Advisory Committee comprised of faculty members of the City University of New York Graduate School and other experts in research design, statistical analysis, and ESOL instruction developed an Impact Study research design to assess the effectiveness of *Crossroads Café* materials in both hybrid and distance learning modes. To execute the research plan formulated by the Advisory Committee, the CASE *Crossroads Café* professional staff structured specific research protocols and designed a series of data collection instruments for use before, during, and after the Impact Study experimental period.

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[12] Members of the Advisory Committee: Dr. Alan Gross, Dr. Bert Flugman, Dr. Ruth Diones, Dr. Susan Stempleski, Dr. Patricia Mooney Gonzalez, Dr. Carole Tittle, Dr. Dolores Perrin, Dr. Blair Rudes.

Experimental and Control Conditions Defined

All subjects participating in the study were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: 1) Distance Learners, 2) Hybrid Learners, or 3) Control. For the Impact Study, these conditions were defined by their learning activities:

1. Distance Learning Condition
    a. Learners attended an orientation session to learn about *Crossroads Café* and provided personal and demographic information;
    b. Adult learners were identified as lacking English language proficiency;
    c. Learners underwent pre and post-testing;
    d. Learners worked with *Crossroads Café* primarily on their own;
    e. Learners maintained contact with their teachers only via telephone and/or mail throughout the learning period.
2. Hybrid Learning Condition
    a. Learners attended an orientation session to learn about *Crossroads Café* and provided personal and demographic information;
    b. Adult learners were identified as lacking English language proficiency;
    c. Learners underwent pre and post-testing;
    d. Learners worked with *Crossroads Café* primarily on their own;
    e. Learners met weekly or bi-weekly with their teachers in a limited academic relationship.

For the Impact Study, distance learning and hybrid conditions were considered experimental modes. Pre and post-test data collected from students and teachers working in the two experimental modes of instruction were compared with data collected from control subjects. The control condition was defined as follows:

3. Control Condition
    a. Adult learners underwent the same pre and post-testing as those in Hybrid and Distance Learning conditions;

b. Adult learners were identified as lacking English language proficiency;
c. Adult learners provided the same personal and demographic information at the beginning and at the end of the 26 week period as those in Hybrid and Distance Learning conditions;
d. Adult learners did not participate in any formal English language study program during the 26 week experimental period.

In all three conditions, a student self-reporting questionnaire was administered, and pre and post-testing was conducted. For the hybrid and distance learning groups, Student and Teacher Logs were completed at predetermined intervals throughout the study. Completed logs were forwarded to the CASE *Crossroads Café* office for scanning into the computer SPSS program.[13] Students participating in the study received stipends of $25 at pre-testing and $35 at post-testing.

Non-Traditional Learning Strategies

In an effort to reach the multitude of unserved LEP adults, hybrid and distance learning modalities are being employed experimentally nationwide as alternatives to traditional classroom instruction.[14] Initially conceived as models that can more easily accommodate convoluted adult student schedules, hybrid and distance learning alternatives may also reduce the need for new classroom construction, a benefit not to be ignored during times of limited budgets. Although teacher student contact time is reduced as compared with traditional classroom models, time on task, individual pacing, and other factors which are part of a well-structured *Crossroads Café* program may compensate for less teacher student contact and, thus, sustain a satisfactory rate of English language acquisition.

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[13] *Statistical Program for the Social Studies*, SPSS 8.0 for Windows

[14] Rudes and Stempleski, 1997

Additionally, the inherent flexibility of hybrid and distance learning enables adult learners to pursue their studies systematically at home at their own convenience and at their own pace. Not only may this flexibility reduce the student attrition customarily found in traditional ESOL programs, but these innovative strategies may provide instruction for LEP adults who otherwise would not have an opportunity to learn English in a structured environment.

Rudes and Stempleski have identified characteristics of successful distance learners in programs other than ESOL.[15] In doing so, they noted the remarkable similarity of those characteristics with the characteristics of the ESOL adult population. In both populations, the students are older and highly motivated; most are women with small children; most are employed either part or full time; most are burdened with multiple obligations and suffer limited resources. Researchers were hopeful that those characteristics that characterize successful distance learners in non-ESOL programs would also be operative among adult ESOL hybrid and distance learners.

Use of the BEST and CASAS Battery

Based on a search of the literature and because a federal research group had already indicated a preference for the Basic English Skills Test (BEST), the Impact Study design also included the BEST as its pre and post-testing instrument.[16] Pre-testing began in March 1998. However, within the first month, very high pre-test scores on the BEST were reported, raising concerns of a potential "ceiling effect" for BEST post-test scores. Moreover, as earlier studies had indicated that *Crossroads Café* materials were most effective with intermediate and advanced students, pre-selecting subjects with low pre-test scores would generate a subject pool least appropriate for the research purposes of this study. Therefore, rather than mitigating a ceiling effect by including only students whose scores on a scale of 0 - 77 were 50 or lower, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) battery was adopted.[17]

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[15] Rudes and Stempleski, 1997

[16] *The Basic English Skills Test (BEST), Test Manual*, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC., 1984

CASAS offers a wider testing range than the BEST and is available in scaled forms for multiple levels of difficulty. Adults accepted with BEST scores remained in the study. All students who subsequently became part of the study were tested on the CASAS battery. Thus, the effects of *Crossroads Café* are reported in terms of two different achievement tests.

Dr. Rudes, principal investigator for the federal pilot study, was apprised of CASE's findings regarding the pre-test results; and, discovering the same problem with the BEST in the federal pilot, he also substituted the CASAS Reading Life Skills section as the federal pilot assessment instrument.

With the substitution of the CASAS, researchers realized that a comparison of BEST and CASAS test results on samples of adult learners in different *Crossroads Café* conditions was possible. Therefore, the research team requested permission from the NYS Education Department to increase the numbers in the Impact Study so that the number tested on the CASAS battery would approximate those tested on the BEST. In summary, an opportunity was presented to study the impact of *Crossroads Café* as assessed by two different standardized tests commonly used in the ESOL community and to compare their findings. The team considered that the findings generated by the pre and post-test forms of each instrument could help to determine those conditions under which each test might be used most appropriately.

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[17] *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)*, San Diego, CA., 1993.

Which Were the Participating Sites?

Ten publicly funded organizations and agencies participated in this Impact Study. Six Community Based Organizations (CBO's) in four of the five boroughs of New York City (Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan and Queens) provided the urban experimental component. The remaining four sites were Rochester, Buffalo, Long Beach, and Mt. Vernon, New York.

Table 1. Participating Sites and Their Characteristics[18]

Site	Experimental Conditions	Location	Number of Teachers	Number of Cycles
Bronx Educational Services	Control Hybrid Distance	City	2	1 Full 1 Short
Chinatown Manpower	Control Hybrid	City	2	1 Full
YMCA Elesair	Hybrid	City	1	1 Short
Flatbush Haitian	Control Distance	City	1	1 Short
Frontier	Control Distance	Rural	1	1 Full 1 Short
Highbridge	Control Hybrid	City	1	1 Full
Long Beach	Control Hybrid	Suburban	2	2 Full
Mt. Vernon	Control Distance	Suburban	1	1 Full
Rush-Henrietta	Distance	Rural	1	2 Full
Shorefront YM-YWHA	Control Hybrid	City	4	1 Full 1 Short
TOTALS	8 Control 6 Hybrid 5 Distance	6 City 4 Out of City	16 Teachers	10 Full 5 Short

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[18] Full cycles are defined as 26 weeks or more; short cycles are defined as fewer than 26 weeks but at least 13 weeks.

Each site offered instruction in only one experimental condition, except for Bronx Educational Services which provided instruction in both hybrid and distance conditions. Thus, six sites conducted hybrid programs; five sites conducted distance learning programs; and eight of the ten sites provided control students.

Given historically[19] projected levels of student attrition, the loss of one participating site, and the small number of hybrid students who initially pre-tested on the CASAS test, the need for an expanded student base was soon apparent. Upon request, three site directors agreed to initiate a second series of experimental student groups, and one additional site, YMCA Elesair, was enlisted to replace the Father Billini Center in Queens.

Duration of the Experiment

Of the fifteen *Crossroads Café* programs that were conducted at the ten sites, ten completed full twenty-six week cycles. However, in an effort to expand the experimental base within realistic time constraints, five programs that started late were concluded before twenty-six weeks elapsed. In Table 1, these programs are designated short cycle programs, although all were operational 16 weeks or more.

Who Were the Instructors?

Eighteen teachers were trained in the use of *Crossroads Café* materials, in distance and hybrid instructional techniques, and in the implementation of the research protocols.[20] Procedures for pre and post-testing were reviewed and sample video and text materials were distributed. The teachers and program administrators were briefed in the research protocols[21] and instructed in the proper use of the data collection instruments.

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[19] Young, Morgan, Fleischman, and Fitzgerald, 1994. Forty-three percent of students are lost after 3 months of study, and 57% of students are lost after 6 months of study.

[20] Training curriculum attached as Appendix A.

During the course of the Impact Study, two instructors left because of changes in employment. Of the remaining sixteen instructors, twelve were women. All were experienced ESOL teachers. Thirteen could converse in a language other than English.

Teachers underwent an average of 20 hours (std = 14.59) of training in *Crossroads Café*, which included preparation for this Impact Study as well as for prior work with *Crossroads*. Among the teachers in the study, 11 taught in the hybrid condition, 4 taught distance learners, and one taught both. (*See Figure 1: ESOL Teaching Experience*.)

Of the instructors participating in this Impact Study, two who were teaching in the hybrid condition had prior experience in both distance and hybrid situations. Six teachers in the hybrid condition had prior experience teaching in that mode. Three distance learning instructors had prior experience as distance learning teachers. Five had ESOL teaching experience in traditional classroom settings only. During the course of the Impact Study, *Crossroads Café* teachers worked with an average of 22 students at a time, with the numbers ranging from 5 students to 70. All teachers received an honorarium for participating in the study.

Teacher Training

All Impact Study teachers participated in a six hour *Crossroads Café* professional staff training session that was led by three experienced *Crossroads Café* teachers, one of the co-authors of the *Crossroads* materials, and the research staff. The importance of the training session was stressed because of the indications regarding the value of the teacher training that surfaced in the *Crossroads Café* study conducted in Florida.[22] The training included the following activities:

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[21] Protocols employed attached as *Appendix B*.

1. A detailed discussion of the *Crossroads Café* materials,
2. A presentation of the philosophy behind the *Crossroads Café* instructional program,
3. An analysis of the specific language skills targeted by each of the *Crossroads Café* components,
4. An exposition of the art of successful *Crossroads Café* hybrid and distance teaching,
5. A discussion of successful teachers' stratagems that help to reduce adult ESOL student attrition,
6. A thorough explanation of the research protocols and how they were to be applied,
7. A dissection of all of the data collection forms to familiarize teachers with their content, function, and importance, and
8. An explication of the components of the BEST, how to proctor the test, and how to score it.[23]

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Adults

In the United States, the distinguishing characteristics of the limited English proficient population are revealing:[24]

- Virtually all are foreign born;
- Just over half are women;
- Two-thirds are between the ages of 22 and 45;

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[22] McLean, Butler, Jameson, J. Shaffer and R. H. Shaffer, 1997

[23] See *Appendix A*.

[24] Rudes and Stempleski, 1997

- Forty-six percent (46%) are employed;
- Sixty-five percent (65%) earned at least a high school diploma in their native land;
- Eighty-five percent (85%) currently live in major metropolitan areas;
- Sixty-nine percent (69%) of those in ESOL classes speak Spanish;
- Twenty-seven percent (27%) speak an Asian language;
- Fifty-six percent (56%) reside in states west of the Mississippi River.

Characteristics common to ESOL learners tend to increase the poignancy of their plight.[25] Surveys conducted by researchers[26] in the field report that these adult learners are strongly motivated to learn English. They seek to participate more fully in American life. They want to play a more important role in their children's education. They feel great pressure to improve their work situation or to get a better job. They know that mastering the new language will enable them to manage everyday chores better. They recognize a need to help others in their native land. They are aware of the degree to which enhanced English proficiency will boost their own self-esteem. Yet, only to a fortunate few have access to professional English language instruction.

The Benefits of English Language Instruction

As a matter of public policy, limited English proficiency among a large segment of the nation's population denies all Americans the enhanced quality of life that would accrue from the talents, knowledge, culture, and skills that are contributed by new Americans. The inability to read, write, and speak English also imposes a cultural and ethnic isolation upon new Americans that impedes their contributions to and their absorption into American society. The dearth nationwide of ESOL instruction perpetuates economic dependence among immigrants to the detriment of us all.

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[25] Rudes and Stempleski, 1997

[26] Spiegel and Rayman, 1996; Brod, 1995

Our nation, traditionally, has recognized the value of the contributions made by immigrants in all fields of endeavor. As compared with access to citizenship in most other nations, access to full citizenship in the United States throughout the nation's history has been relatively easy. Virtually open borders through the eighteenth, nineteenth, and most of the twentieth centuries are indications of the value our nation has placed upon absorption of immigrants. To this end, the nation's constitution and laws apply equally to all residents regardless of status. They guarantee every individual and sub-group without qualification equal opportunity, economic stability, and fundamental political protections.

To facilitate the entry of new Americans into mainstream American life, traditional ESOL instruction generally incorporates into the curriculum essential pre-employment, workplace, vocational, and citizenship survival and life skills. Yet, although adult learners in ESOL classes recognize the value of their ESOL education, real life complications, over which they have little or no control, often thwart adult learners' efforts to attend class regularly, if at all.

Student Attrition

Causes of student attrition among ESOL adult learners frequently include personal problems, such as demands of a job, scheduling, transportation, child care, and illness. In addition, invasive activities at initial classroom encounters, such as batteries of tests and extensive questionnaires, may discourage continued attendance; yet, agency reporting and documentation requirements as well as research methods often require initial assessment and data collection to validate and fund programs.

Certainly, outreach to new Americans and to others who lack English language proficiency is consonant with professed public policy priorities[27] and, therefore, warrants special efforts to ensure success. *Crossroads Café* programs may be the means by which professionals in adult education can address the problem of student attrition, possibly the most difficult of issues to resolve. Because of its design and flexibility as an instructional instrument, *Crossroads Café* provides an attractive vehicle by which ESOL program administrators and teachers may be able to increase enrollment, retain adult learners, provide the support services students need, facilitate independent study, and create a dynamic interactive communications regimen with students studying independently. Creative use of *Crossroads Café* offers the promise of reducing student attrition to tolerable levels.[28] This Impact Study has sought to assess the effect of the *Crossroads Café* hybrid and distance learning programs and methodologies on student attrition.

Design and Procedure

This study implemented a Pre-test — Post-test Control Group Design utilizing three groups: control, hybrid and distance learning. All adult learners were tested with either the Literacy Skills section of the *Basic English Skills Test* (BEST) or the reading and listening comprehension sections of the *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System* (CASAS). Each student completed a demographic and personal history questionnaire. Hybrid and distance students also completed personal performance logs on five units at regularly spaced study intervals. Their instructors completed logs rating their students' performance at the same intervals.

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[27] Adult Education Act (AEA) amendment of 1990

[28] Brod, 1997; Fitzgerald, 1997

Experimental Protocols

The research design was implemented through the application of detailed protocols which instructed the professional staff regarding the conduct of the Impact Study. The purpose of the protocols was to ensure uniformity of conditions across sites, to provide precise directions for Impact Study implementation by the professional staff, to create clear expectations for each condition, and to limit experimental error as much as possible.

Hybrid Condition: Students working in the hybrid condition studied, reviewed, and used *Crossroads Café* videos and support materials at home as described previously. Teachers met with students either weekly or bi-weekly to monitor the students' progress, to provide encouragement for their continued studies, to converse with learners in English, to discuss *Worktext* or *Photo Stories* exercises, to have students write, read aloud, work on pronunciation, and explore English idioms. The sessions were primarily oral interchanges. When feasible, students met in groups and worked cooperatively on program units. If students had special needs or if they fell behind, teachers had the flexibility to work with them individually. Teachers phoned or wrote to students who had not contacted a teacher for two weeks.

Distance Learning Condition: Students working in the distance learning condition studied, reviewed, and used *Crossroads Café* videos and support materials at home. Teachers contacted students by telephone only at least bi-weekly. Students were urged to call instructors as often as they wished, but to call at least once a week. If students were not in contact for two consecutive weeks, teachers mailed letters of inquiry encouraging students to continue with their studies. To facilitate communications between student and teacher, voice mail capability was established for all distance learning teachers. Each adult ESOL student was encouraged to find a partner with stronger English language skills to help him/her work on the *Crossroads Café* units. The partner was urged to be present during the student's phone sessions with the instructor. A letter with basic unit-related questions, study suggestions, and words of encouragement accompanied all video tapes mailed to students.

Another goal in establishing the protocols was to ensure full usage of all five components of the *Crossroads Café* program. Teachers and students were exhorted to avoid contact with non-*Crossroads Café* ESOL materials during their *Crossroads Café* studies. Students were taught how to study using *Crossroads Café*. Students were also encouraged to watch the videos frequently and to work with a partner whose English proficiency surpassed their own. They were urged to work at comfortable levels in the *Worktext* initially and then to work at graduated proficiency levels as they progressed through the *Worktext*. Teachers suggested that students schedule regular weekly study time and to view videos with their families. Students were expected to complete at least one unit every two weeks; however, individual differences resulted in a wide range of unit productivity.

Student Orientation

Teachers and researchers participated in the effort to recruit students and helped to arrange the initial orientation meetings. *Appendix A* presents the recommended activities for the introductory session at all sites at which pre-tests were administered and initial background information forms completed. Following the pre-testing and distribution of the *Crossroads Café* materials, students in all three conditions received their stipends. If time allowed, controls were dismissed and Video #1 was shown to the experimental group.

Measurement Tools

The underlying purpose of collecting multiple measures of the construct "student success" is triangulation. That is, each of the measures described below assesses a unique component of "student success." The results converge to create the desired construct. In this study, "student success" is defined in the following terms:

1) Improved language skills and comprehension as measured by higher scores on standardized tests,

2) Higher teacher ratings of student understanding,

3) Higher student ratings of their own degree of understanding of English language radio and television,

4) Increased confidence and comfort in speaking English on the telephone as measured by students' higher ratings of their own facility,

5) Positive growth in employability as measured by advances in job status, and

6) Advances in job status attributed to improved English language skills.

Instrumentation

Several data collection forms[29] were designed:

1. Initial Student Background Information Form,
2. Student Log,
3. Teacher Log,
4. Follow-up Student Information Form, and
5. Teacher Background Information Form.

Initial Student Background Information Form

The Initial Student Background Information Form, in addition to compiling student demographic data, also recorded the following student ratings:

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[29] See *Appendix C* for a complete set of forms.

- How confident did they feel when using English?
- How comfortable did they feel when speaking English on the telephone?
- How well did they understand English language radio and television?
- How many days per week did they read an English language newspaper?
- Could they get by in their communities without speaking English at all?
- If they did speak English during the course of a regular day, approximately how many hours were spent speaking English?
- Were they currently employed?
- Did they have young children at home?
- Did they live in a multi-generational household?

In addition to the original questions, the follow-up form completed at the end of the study also asked students to indicate any changes that had occurred in their work status during the experimental period.

Student Logs

Upon the completion of five consecutive units, students submitted a Student Log for the fifth unit completed. Therefore, during the program, five logs evenly interspersed throughout the 26 week period were completed. For each unit, students recorded time on task in hours and minutes watching the video, working on the *Worktext* and/or *Photo Stories,* and working with a partner. Students also identified relationships with their partners (e.g. a friend or relative) with whom they studied and reported whether or not they had watched the video with their families. Students also entered into the logs the total number of times they viewed each particular episode.

Teacher Logs

Teacher Logs were completed to parallel each of the 5 logs completed by the students. Teacher Logs also recorded the number of contact hours the teachers spent with each student. On the Logs, teachers assessed each student's general understanding of the video and the student's ability to communicate verbally that understanding. A five point rating scale was used, in which "5" indicated excellent understanding of the video or excellent verbal expression of understanding, and "1" reflected hardly any understanding of the video or very poor verbal expression of understanding. Finally, teachers noted in their Logs any problems the students reported that interfered with their studying.

Follow-up Student Background Information Form

At the post-testing session, students also completed Follow-up Student Background Information Forms which provided post-course ratings on the level of confidence students felt in using English, their comfort level in speaking English on the telephone, and their perceived level of understanding when listening to English language radio and television. The form also asked the students to rate how much their English language skills had improved during the experimental period and to report all changes that had occurred in their employment status during this period.

Teacher's Background Information Form

The Teacher's Background Information Form provided data regarding the teachers' professional experience in ESOL teaching and their experience with *Crossroads Café* in particular.

Tests Employed in the Impact Study

Basic English Skills Test (BEST)

Originally, student pre and post-testing to determine English language proficiency achievement was to be assessed using the *Basic English Skills Test* (BEST). When the

BEST was discontinued as the assessment instrument and the *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System* (CASAS) was selected as the alternate, the Research Advisory Committee recommended that, although the BEST had its limitations, valuable information could be gathered by post-testing on the BEST those who had pre-tested on the BEST. As both tests are useful in ESOL instruction and are widely accepted instruments in the ESOL arsenal, comparative data generated by the two instruments were likely to be of academic and practical value.

The BEST Literacy Skills section including reading and writing and the CASAS reading and listening comprehension sections are standardized and criterion referenced. The BEST was developed in the 1980's to assess "survival level competencies" of newly arrived refugees.

> Topic areas ... were personal identification, greetings, kinship terms, health terms, parts of the body, numbers, time, money, shopping for food and clothing, housing, emergencies, directions, using the telephone, completing simple forms, writing checks, addressing envelopes, and other similar writing activities. Grammatical structures identified as necessary for the accomplishment of these tasks included the simple present and present progressive tenses "yes/no" and "wh-" questions, and negations. Language function given top priority included imparting information, seeking information, and seeking clarification. (BEST Test Manual p. 53)

Designed for beginning to low intermediate learners of English, the BEST scores can be equated with Student Performance Levels (SPL's) as defined by the Mainstream Language Training Project in 1985 and are, therefore, criterion referenced.[30] The SPL's describe specifically, in operational terms, the student's reading and writing skill levels and correlate those skills with typical instructional levels. For example, a student at SPL-V (5) can "read and understand some *short simplified* materials related to *basic needs* with some misinterpretations [their italics]."[31]

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[30] While BEST is designed for beginning to low intermediate learners, *Crossroad Café* is meant for advanced beginners and intermediate students. This is not the best match.

Despite varying item types such as *Fill in the Blank*, *Multiple Choice*, and *Open Ended Writing Tasks*, the internal consistency reliability estimates of Form B and Form C of the BEST, the forms used for pre and post-testing in this study, are both 0.97. The BEST was group administered, and students wrote their answers directly in the test booklets. Two *Crossroads* staff members were trained to score the two essay questions. The inter-rater agreement was high (r = .99).

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)

Like the BEST, the CASAS *Life Skill* series focuses on assessing competency by the use of test items that focus on context based "functional life skills." Unlike BEST, CASAS offers an entire program, which includes an appraisal of initial skills, a selection of competencies to be learned, targeted instruction, and an evaluation of outcomes appropriate to the original needs assessment. In this way, instruction and assessment are linked within the curriculum.

The explicitly defined competencies needed by adults to function in everyday life, as defined in Northcutt's *Adult Performance Level Study* (CASAS Technical Manual, 1993) are integral to the CASAS battery. CASAS competencies are hierarchically structured:

1. Content priority areas are listed;
2. For each content area, competencies are defined;
3. A measurable competency statement for each competency is provided; and
4. Each competency may be presented in several item formats or tasks, e.g. filling in blanks or reading a chart.

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[31] SPL's are defined in *Appendix D* as cited in the *BEST Manual*, pages 66-73.

CASAS competencies can also be correlated with the Secretary of Education's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) competencies. These competencies qualify CASAS as a criterion referenced test. An advantage in using the CASAS battery is that it measures four overlapping levels of progressively increasing difficulty. Descriptions of typical real-life skills are associated with each skill level and with each scoring range from Level A (beginning literacy) through Level D (pre-GED).[32]

The CASAS battery provides conversion tables that translate raw scores on all four levels into scores scaled within the limits of a single range. Therefore, with a common reference base, comparisons of scores can be made easily, reliably, and without regard to the forms used in testing. With CASAS, an ESOL instructor or researcher can assess a wide range of students' reading comprehension levels in less than one hour and their listening comprehension levels in about forty minutes. The overlapping forms of the CASAS minimize the likelihood of a "ceiling effect." All items are multiple choice and answers are recorded on a separate answer sheet. Both the listening comprehension and reading sections can be group administered. KR reliability of the anchoring forms ranges in the vicinity of .85.

Historically, using commercially available tests such as BEST and CASAS to assess adult ESOL learners' English language proficiency has been suspect because researchers have recognized the fact that students lacking English proficiency may not be able to respond satisfactorily to multiple choice paper and pencil tests:

- They may have difficulties with reading or with the vocabulary;

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[32] See Appendix E for skill level descriptions as defined for the CASAS battery.

- They may be unfamiliar with cultural assumptions underlying an item format;
- They may be inexperienced in test-taking, test differences, or testing conventions, e.g. not knowing how to fill in an answer sheet.[33]

Nonetheless, with these caveats in mind, performance by experimental condition among three randomized cohorts in which the weaknesses inherent in paper and pencil tests are operative equally throughout. In addition, ancillary data provided by teacher and student logs provide alternative collateral corroborative information on student achievement, student confidence and self-esteem, and changes in the student's life situation.

In reviewing the BEST and the CASAS tests, Sticht (1990) expressed concerns about the CASAS battery. He concluded that the CASAS reading test, while representing useful life-skills, assesses a comparatively low level of reading ability. Sticht found CASAS questions to require literal comprehension only and exclude higher-order comprehension and thinking skills, such as drawing inferences or making evaluations. The BEST was subject to the same findings.

For the group administered Listening Comprehension Test, researchers must consider issues specific to that genre. The CASAS Listening Comprehension Test, like others of its kind, relies upon the subject's ability to read printed components of the test items while listening to spoken information. The subjects are required to read maps, to read signs, to track visual test items in test booklets as they listen to directions, and then to enter responses to directions or questions on a printed answer sheet separate from the test booklet. These multiple tasks and mixed competencies certainly confound the researcher's ability to assess a subject's listening comprehension level. The effort to assess a singular listening ability requires the successful application of multiple communication modalities. Therefore, any simple and direct assessment of a subject's listening comprehension based upon this group administered listening comprehension test is severely compromised, if not entirely precluded. Corroborative data from other sources must be sought before firm conclusions can be drawn when assigning a listening skill level.

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[33] Burt and Keenan, 1994

Lytle and Wolfe (1989) noted the small number of items used to sample CASAS competencies and pointed out that the focus solely on competencies placed limits on the instructional and learning fields. Davis and Yap (1992) reported that students felt that CASAS tests underestimated the actual level of the students' own achievements.

Despite these concerns and limitations, the Impact Study Advisory Committee deemed the CASAS and BEST to be the most appropriate tests of those available for the evaluation of *Crossroads Café*. With their focus on real-life situations, these tests are well suited to the context based *Crossroads Café* format.

Also the *Worktext/Photo Stories* print materials emphasize multiple levels of difficulty and address mastery of grammatical structures within the communicative context of language function. This stress on mature life experience learning within a graduated adult language acquisition program reflects the dominant focus of both the BEST and the CASAS battery.

Results

Data Collection

Prior to the implementation of the experimental model and application of the protocols, researchers had anticipated a straightforward assessment of the *Crossroads Café* hybrid and distance learning programs. However, at the very first introductory session, adjustments were required to adapt the protocols to the realities of the field conditions.

Although plans had called for group pre-testing of ESOL adult learners at one or perhaps two sessions at each site, many adults who were eager to participate found that because of extenuating circumstances they were unable to attend the scheduled sessions. Children were sick; promised transportation did not materialize; unexpected job-related responsibilities arose. Many ESOL students requested a delay in starting. On average, for the originally scheduled pre-test date, as many as sixteen of twenty-five ESOL learners expected did not appear.

Many who did appear, of necessity, brought small children with them. At sites in Queens, Long Beach, Rush Henrietta, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Westchester, several children — from infants to about ten years of age — were present during the introduction and pre-testing. Other accommodations to care for these children were unavailable, although in Long Beach and Rush Henrietta special child-care staff had been hired. This arrangement was only partially successful as funding constraints limited the number of adults who could be hired for this purpose and children were often unwilling to remain with unfamiliar caretakers.

Adherence to the Protocol

As described earlier in this report, teachers were trained in the Impact Study's protocol and were given a detailed Protocol Manual. In these ways, the meaning of "hybrid" and of "distance" learning was defined in great detail. While teachers were given some flexibility and discretion, they were required to and did adhere to the protocol specifications. For the most part, teacher contact in distance learning was limited to the telephone. However, students may have visited a site to exchange videos.

Hybrid meetings were opportunities for students to ask questions, to practice conversation and pronunciation skills, and to write English. Only in one case did the teacher report showing some of the videos at the hybrid meetings. While learning was to be self-paced and the videos could be watched in any order, some sites proceeded through the program in numerical order, Lesson 1 to Lesson 26.

Controls were asked on the Follow-up Student Background Information Form what they had been doing to learn English during the past 26 weeks. As requested of them, 51 of 53 control students had not taken formal instruction. Most had practiced English by listening to the radio, watching television, and speaking English with friends and acquaintances. *(See Figure 2: Learning Activities Prior to Crossroads as Reported by Retained Students.)*

Characteristics of Pre-tested Subjects

Four hundred seventy-five (475) students were pre-tested for this study. Reflective of the population of New York State, the Impact Study participants were extremely diverse. (*See Figure 3: National Origin Pre-Tested Students.*) Students represented 48 different nations of origin with fluency in 24 different first languages. The most common first language among the students was Spanish (60.0%); Russian (14.2%), and Chinese (9.7%) in that order. (*See Figure 4: First Language of Pre-Tested Students.*) This distribution reflects the proportions of immigrants arriving in the United States in the 1997 Census data.

Among the participants, 49% of students had attended high school or had completed their high school education. ($\bar{x}$ = 11.04 years, std = 3.29). Almost one quarter (24%) had attended or completed an institution of higher education. *(See Figure 5: Years of Formal Education before Emigrating.)* Virtually all students could read and/or write in their first language — 98.9% and 96.6% respectively of those responding. As is common among this population of learners, approximately two-thirds of the students were female (66.5%). Most (61%) were between 30 and 49 years of age, averaging of 40.5 (std = 11.4). *(See Figure 6: Pre-Tested Students by Age.)* Of the 475 pre-tested participants, 327 (68.8%) were New York City residents; 148 (31.2%) were from suburban or rural sites.

To the degree feasible, students were randomly assigned to experimental conditions. However, sites varied in the rigor of random assignment. Often spouses were unwilling to be separated. Some applicants were adamant about beginning to study immediately and refused placement as controls. Pre-tested learners were actively recruited for inclusion in the control condition if, after assignment to an experimental condition, they did not sustain minimal contact with their teachers. By the start of the program at the fifth site, students were being randomly assigned to condition before orientation and testing. Controls were invited for testing on a different date to reduce the likelihood that students would complain about condition assignments. The distribution by condition of the pre-tested students was as follows: 169 were assigned to the hybrid condition; 132 were assigned to the distance learning condition, and 156 served as controls. *(See Figure 7: Pre-Test Distribution by Condition.)*

Those enrolled as hybrid or distance learning students immediately received all videos and textbooks free. Control students received the no textbooks or materials, but were promised priority placement for study at post-testing, thus establishing an active waiting list for the next session. All received their stipends of $25 at their pre-testing session.

Student Retention

Retention among adult students is a serious concern. In this study, a student is considered "retained" if she or he has been both pre and post-tested. This section discusses common programmatic occurrences that may relate to attrition and presents data examining possible relationships between student background characteristics and retention.

Of the four hundred seventy-five (475) adults with limited English proficiency who were pre-tested, two hundred seventy-nine (279) or 57.3% returned for post-testing – a respectable retention percentage for this population.[34] When applied to the entire study, the retention rate was better than originally expected. However, variability of retention rate across experimental sites and among different ethnic groups presents the likelihood that geographic differences and differences in learning styles have a direct effect on attrition. Ameliorating these differences may require greater flexibility in retention policies and more aggressive outreach practices than can normally be provided in traditional classrooms.

Table 2. Retention Rates by Test, Pre-Test Means, and Condition

	BEST Pre-Test Means					CASAS Pre-Test Reading Means					CASAS Listening				
	Left		Retained			Left		Retained			Left		Retained		
	N	$\bar{x}$	N	$\bar{x}$	%	N	$\bar{x}$	N	$\bar{x}$	%	N	$\bar{x}$	N	$\bar{x}$	%
C	18	44.8	52	44.6	74.3	50	210.2	36	208.9	41.9	43	203.6	39	206.7	47.6
Experimental Groups															
H	45	39.5	40	50.8	47.1	24	209.5	60	205.0	71.4	24	204.4	58	203.1	70.7
D	24	48.7	31	49.2	56.4	25	206.3	52	215.0	67.5	17	206.8	60	210.5	77.9
T	69		71		50.7	49		112		69.6	41		118		65.1

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[34] Young, Morgan, Fitzgerald and Fleischman, 1993

Retention rates were lower among those who pre-tested on the BEST. These students were among the first to enter the program and were among the population for which the possible shortcomings of the BEST as a pre and post-test instrument were discovered. Recognizing the possibility of a strong "ceiling effect," the research staff's first response to the unexpected high scores on the BEST pre-test was to exclude from the study a significant number of candidates with higher pre-test BEST scores.

However, since the *Crossroads Café* program was initially designed for use with advanced beginners through high intermediate levels of English proficiency among ESOL students, this pre-selection of lower level participants was recognized to be counter productive early in the study. Nonetheless, by selecting candidates in this way, the lowest scoring ESOL candidates dominated at the first six sites. Two hundred ten students (210) were pre-tested on the BEST before the CASAS battery could be deployed.

To avoid skewing the experimental population, the Impact Study Advisory Committee and the research staff responded by adopting the CASAS battery. Because of the multiple levels available with the CASAS battery, fears of a "ceiling effect" disappeared. Therefore, adults who were pre-tested on the CASAS represented low, intermediate, and, to a lesser extent, high levels of English proficiency in experimental and control conditions.

This change had a direct impact on the percent of students retained. At sites which lost most of their experimental learners, the hybrid students had been tested on the BEST. Sites employing the CASAS Reading Test show higher retention rates than for students tested on the BEST in both experimental conditions. Of those tested on the CASAS Reading, 69.6% were retained; of those tested on the BEST, 50.7% were retained.

The hybrid students tested on the BEST who did not remain in the program averaged a score of 39.5 as compared to an average score of 50.8 for who were retained. This difference of 11.3 points at the start, equal to one full Student Performance Level grade (SPL), may reflect the early effort at the first sites to select only those candidates whose scores on the BEST were low. Since *Crossroads Café* was designed for LEP adults with a higher initial English language proficiency, *Crossroads* may be an inappropriate intervention for this population. The higher rate of attrition among these low scoring LEP adults may be attributed to a heightened sense of frustration caused by *Crossroad Café*'s difficulty level.

The difference in retention rates between the BEST and the CASAS controls runs counter to the data regarding the experimental subjects. *(See Table 2, page 33.)* As controls were absolved from any formal language acquisition intervention, the data seem to warrant further investigation to seek a better understanding of the behavior of ESOL control groups in experimental formats.

In addition to the initial selection of lower scoring pre-tested BEST subjects, the unanticipated cessation of all distance education programs at Southern Westchester BOCES left thirty *Crossroads Café* students with no teacher and no program. Not until the Mt. Vernon School District agreed to accept the *Crossroads Café* program and not until the program was physically housed at the Mt. Vernon Adult Learning Center about two months later was the program revived. Other sites suspended operations during the summer. Two teachers left the study to take better jobs elsewhere. In one situation, the departure of the teacher resulted in the abandonment of the site. Other interruptions common among ESOL programs also caused delays and upheavals.

Retention and Associated Factors

Overall, the reasons for student attrition in this study were multiple and diffuse. Typical programmatic issues contributed to student losses. Students with the lowest initial English language skills were more likely to discontinue. Data also suggest differential loss depending on cultural influences. However, while several indications for causes of attrition were present, too often programmatic, background, and instructional issues were sufficiently confounded so that drawing firm conclusions or making inferences was difficult.

In an effort to understand retention as a function of one or more of the following student variables, logistic regression analyses[35] were conducted seeking correlations:

1] Number of years studied in school,
2] Presence of young children in the household — yes/no,
3] Presence of adult relatives living in the household — yes/no,
4] Current employment status (a paying job) — yes/no,
5] Student's age,
6] Number of years the student had been living in the United States,
7] Urban, rural, or suburban site of instruction,
8] Female or male,
9] Country of origin,
10] Pre-test score, and
11] Experimental condition.

For BEST students, several of these variables were statistically related to retention:

- The relationship between pre-test score and experimental condition were statistically significant, with lower scoring hybrid students more likely to drop out of the study.[36]

Rural and suburban students were less likely to be retained. The sudden loss of the Westchester BOCES, a suburban site, and its delayed reinstatement at Mt. Vernon two months later may have lowered the suburban students' retention rate. (B = 1.46)[37] (*See Figure 8: Retention by Urban, Suburban, and Rural Sites.*)

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[35] After initially entering pre-test scores and experimental condition, the additional variables were submitted in a forward stepwise selection method based on the probability of a likelihood ratio statistic.

[36] Even with this relationship, the study's main research questions can be analyzed and unbiased estimates calculated using listwise deletion for missing data. That is, all students without post-test scores were dropped from the analysis.

- Students with young children were more likely to remain in the study (B = .93).
- As years of schooling increased, the student was less likely to be retained. However, the relationship between these variables was small (B = -.17) and can be discounted.
- Based on country of origin, students of Slavic, Eastern European, or Hispanic heritage were more likely to leave the study.
- Students from the Dominican Republic (46.1%), Haiti (40.0%), and Central America (44.9%) showed the poorest retention rates.

Eastern European student retention rates might have been more robust; but one site with mostly a hybrid Slavic/Eastern European population dismissed its students prior to post-testing. Efforts to retrieve and post-test these students were unsuccessful so that, although twenty-six weeks had elapsed, the post data and retention statistics were lost.

For students tested on the CASAS Reading and Listening battery, years of schooling and experimental conditions were significantly related to retention. As with those tested on the BEST, with increased education the student's likelihood of leaving increased. However, as B weights were small, -.16 and -.14 for CASAS Reading and Listening respectively, a firm relationship was not established. *(See Figure 9: Distribution of Retained Students by Years of Education; and Figure 10: Retention by Years of Formal Education.)*

Among all of the students, those of Chinese origin attained the highest retention rate (85%), far outdistancing the nearest best performance by Puerto Rican and Mexican students by more than 18 percentage points. (*See Figure 11: Distribution of Retained Students by National Origin; see Figure 12: Distribution by Language of Retained Students.*)

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[37] Unlike a correlation coefficient, B weights can be larger than 1

Focus Group Insights

The Impact Study teachers and administrators convened in June 1999 for a "Focus Group" discussion of their experiences with *Crossroads Café*. Retention was an important subject. In their view, teacher commitment to the program, persistence, and flexibility were key to limiting attrition among LEP adults. Teachers spoke of the need to phone students regularly at times convenient for the students. Although the teachers all sought to encourage independent learning among their students, the teachers found that they could not wait for students to reach them.

To ensure continued attendance among their students, teachers found that persistence in outreach was essential. They initiated contact with their students and often went to unusual lengths to ensure timely delivery of Crossroads materials. They maintained a vigorous outreach program both by phone and mail to encourage and cajole students into continuing their studies. In the distance learning condition, the teachers often became counselors, friends, and confidants of their students.

Retention, to some degree, is dependent upon the quality of instruction that accompanies *Crossroads Café*. The Focus Group spoke about the importance of teacher training. The consensus was that teachers must be "savvy" in their work with *Crossroads*. They must be able to configure the *Crossroads* materials for their students in their unique situations, to recommend specific strategies for successful independent learning, and to make deft assessments of their students from afar.

Their professionalism must be enriched by a finely honed sensibility to communication that is constrained by the telephone or by very limited personal student contact. Distance and hybrid teachers need to recognize and respond to messages that are inadequately verbalized so that they can provide assistance when the student needs help. The Focus Group was unanimous about the need for special training for *Crossroads Café* teachers who plan to work in distance and hybrid modes. They all agreed that traditional classroom experience, while useful, fell far short of adequate professional preparation for teachers in the experimental modes.

The Focus Group also cited the need for proper orientation for students to *Crossroads Café*. The concept of teaching students to teach themselves is not only foreign to most teachers, but the idea often frightens and discourages LEP adults. *Crossroads* students need to see *Crossroads* as a friendly, supportive program which will not fail them in their effort to master a new language. The LEP adults need to master first the techniques for learning on their own, so that learning English is a natural outgrowth of their efforts. The orientation session is the first thrust in that direction. The teachers then must follow with consistent efforts to improve students' techniques for self-instruction through the use of carefully planned exercises and appropriate materials. Training for the student is, obviously, no less important than training for the teachers.

Retained Student Descriptors[38]

Of the 273 retained students, 66% were female; however, despite the large ratio of women to men, the retention rate for both groups was essentially the same, 56.3% of the females and 58.5% of the males completed the course. The 273 participants who remained in the study were distributed fairly evenly over the three conditions: control had 89, hybrid had 100, and distance had 84. (*See Figure 13: Post-Test Distribution by Condition.*) This distribution may be compared with the pre-test distribution, (*See Figure 7: Pre-Test Distribution by Condition.)*

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[38] These statistics and the percentages that follow are based on responses provided by students to questions on the *Initial Student Background Information* and *Follow-up Student Information Form*. All students did not respond to all questions.

The pre-test and post test numbers and percentages of students retained by test and by condition are charted in Table 2 on page 32. Retention percentages by test are addressed there.

Similar to the intake group, retained students were diverse, coming from 33 different nations (*See Figure 11: Distribution of Retained Students by National Origin*), speaking 18 different primary languages. (*See Figure 12: Distribution of Languages of Retained Students*) Among the students, 49.6% had attended high school; the average number of years of school was 10.86 (std = 3.27). (*See Figures 9 and 10.*) Some students did indicate that they had had virtually no formal education at all while all learners who responded to these noted that they could read (100%) and write (98.4%) in their first language. Differences among the age groups in percent of retention appear to be minimal with 62.7% of students' ages in the 30-49 year old range. The average age was 39.95 (std = 11.11) and ranged from 19 to 74 years. (*See Figure 14: Student Retention Rates by Age, and see Figure 15: Distribution of Retained Students by Age.*)

Of the 273 students who were post-tested, 189 (69.2%) were from New York City and 84 (30.8%) resided in suburban or rural areas. Students participating in this study reported that they had lived in the United States for an average of 7.5 years (std = 8.23);

however, more than half resided in the United States fewer than 2 years. *(See Figure 16: Residence in the USA in Months.)* Although the adult learners reported that they had lived at their current address for an average of 4.43 years (std = 4.99), the median time at the latest address was also less than two years. The maximum duration reported was 43.5 years in the United States and 28 years at the same location. (*See Figure 17: Months at Current Residence.*)

Among the Impact Study post-tested subjects, 147 (53.9%) indicated that they live in a community in which they need not speak English at all. Of those who used English during the day, the students reported a median of only 2 hours daily in which they spoke English in their communities (mean = 3.5, std = 3.58.) *(See Figures 18: English Spoken Daily by Students; and Figure 19: Percent of Pre-Test Students Not Needing to Speak English.)* This information was consistent with and tended to corroborate other evidence of low daily English usage by urban LEP adults who were primarily working in the hybrid condition. Although most students indicated that they read an English language newspaper some days of the week, 88 (35.8%) reported that they did not read any English language newspaper at all. *(See Figure 20: Days per Week Read English Language Newspaper.)*

Many of the adult ESOL students reported bearing major family responsibilities. Among post-tested participants, 176 (64.6%) were responsible for young children, and 122 (44.8%) lived in multi-generational households.

Of the total 273 students post-tested, 142 (51.9%) were working at a paying job. Of the 142 who were employed, 86 (60.5%) worked full time, i.e. 31-48 hours per week;

43 of the 142 LEP adults (30.3%) worked part time, i.e. 30 or fewer hours each week; and 12 (8.5%) of the 142 students reported working regularly 49-60 hours per week. *(See Figure 21: Retained Learners Employment pattern.)* The average work week for all students was 17.64 hours (std =19.04).

Most students in fact had not been in their jobs long. Of the 133 responding to this question, 91 (68.4%) had been employed at their current jobs two years or less. The most common response regarding duration of current employment was one-quarter of a year. More than half had been at the same job fewer than two years. However, the responses in this category ranged from one month to 28 years. *(See Figure 22: Years at Current Job.)* All students who had reported working more than 60 hours per week on the Initial Student Background Information Form left the study prior to post-testing.

Students who remained for the entire experimental period reported that, prior to their work with *Crossroads*, they had learned English in various ways. *Figure 2* reveals that most gained their limited English facility primarily by listening to English language radio and television and by speaking English. Hybrid students indicated much more frequently than control and distance students that they had studied English in class. The greater frequency of prior classroom experience among hybrid students may be the result of program recruiting methods conducted at hybrid program sites. *(See Figure 2: Learning Activities Prior to Crossroads as Reported by Retained Students.)*

Among the students who completed the program, the most frequently mentioned reasons for studying English were the desire to earn more money and to be better equipped to accomplish everyday life chores. Students also cited the need to speak English with their children and to provide them more assistance. *(See Figure 23: Reasons Cited for Studying English.)*

Test Results

The Impact Study sought to answer two primary research questions:

1] Did the hybrid and distance groups perform significantly better than the control group on the BEST, CASAS Reading, and CASAS Listening tests?

2] Did either the hybrid or distance groups score significantly higher than the other on these tests?

In seeking answers, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) procedure which statistically adjusts mean post-test scores by taking into account pre-test scores, was applied.[39]

BEST and CASAS Reading Scores

On both the BEST and the CASAS Reading Test, hybrid and distance students outperformed the control students as shown in the post-test adjusted mean gains by participants. *(See Figure 24: Post-Test Adjusted Means - BEST; and see Figure 25: Post-Test Adjusted Means - CASAS Reading.)* These differences were statistically significant ($t = 3.9$, $p<.000$ and $t = 4.84$, $p<.000$ respectively).

For the BEST, *Crossroads Café* post-test learners scored an adjusted average of 59.6 with controls scoring an adjusted average of 52.6 points. Similarly, on the CASAS Reading, distance learning students averaged 220.8 points (adjusted), hybrid students averaged 219.2 points (adjusted), and controls averaged 213.4 points (adjusted).

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[39] Given the specific nature of our questions, a priori contrasts were used. Results were reported using t statistics. Controlling for differences in pre-test by using an ANCOVA and using a priori contrasts boosts the statistical power of the analyses; that is, it is more likely that real differences can be observed. Tests were also run checking the assumptions underlying inferential statistics. For BEST, CASAS Reading and CASAS Listening, the lack of fit tests, used "to check if the relationship between the dependent variables and independent variables can be adequately described by the model (SPSS Base Manual)," failed to reject the null hypothesis that the model fits (i.e. it fits). Using the Shapiro-Wilk test, the normality assumption was upheld except for CASAS Listening. However, "inferences made about means ... are also valid even when the forms of the populations depart considerably from the normal, provided the n in each sample is relatively large (Hays, 1981, p 347)." In addition, only for CASAS Reading was the Levene Test of Equality of Variances rejected.

Student gains are apparent as unadjusted pre and post test means. On average, *Crossroads Café* experimental learners gained a little less than twice as many points as controls for the BEST (11 versus 6) and a little more than twice as many points as controls for CASAS Reading (10.3 versus 4.5). *(See Figure 26: BEST Mean Reading Point Gains; and see Figure 27: CASAS Mean Reading Point Gains.)*

Student Performance Levels Defined

According to information supplied by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), publisher of the BEST and by CASAS personnel, these gains are of statistical and practical significance. Center for Applied Linguistics data indicate that 120 to 225 hours of instruction can be expected to generate a gain of one Student Performance Level (SPL).[40] On the BEST[41] a gain of 11 points is the equivalent of one SPL and represents "real student achievement." Similarly, CASAS personnel report that a gain of 4 CASAS points has practical significance.[42] For example, in the State of California a gain of 4 CASAS points (1 SPL) on the reading test is required to demonstrate sufficient improvement to warrant state reimbursement.

BEST, CASAS, and SPL Scores

Although equating the BEST scores with CASAS Reading Test scores using psychometric methodologies was not feasible, both BEST and CASAS Reading scores were convertible to a common SPL metric. By exercising this conversion, the BEST scale (0-77) and CASAS scale (165-231) were reduced to a common seven (7) point range. In performing this reduction at a ratio of approximately ten to one, some sensitivity in measurement was lost. However, by combining the BEST and the CASAS populations, the N's were more than doubled. This much larger base strengthened the power of the analysis by increasing the N's to the extent that gains for all students could be compared on the same metric with a high degree of confidence.

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[40] An SPL, Student Performance Level, describes in operational terms the student's reading and writing skill levels as defined by the Mainstream Training Language Project for the BEST. Test items can be scaled on the basis of SPL criteria.

[41] E-mail from Carol van Duzer. She does note that gains can depend on a variety of program and student-related factors, including intensity of instruction, class size, training and experience of the teachers, and so on. These results are based on field testing at 19 sites in the early 1980's.

[42] Personal Communication Linda Taylor, Senior Training Consultant, CASAS.

As before, an Analysis of Covariance was applied to these data. As hypothesized, distance and hybrid students achieved significantly higher SPL's than controls ($t = 6.16$, $p<.000$). For controls, the adjusted mean was 5.2; for hybrid the adjusted mean was 5.8; and for distance, the adjusted mean was 6.0. *(See Figure 28: Post-Test Adjusted Means CASAS and BEST SPL's.)* Again, *Crossroads Café* learners gained approximately twice as much as controls, 1.19 to 0.56 SPL's. *(See Figure 29: Student Performance Level Gains.)* *Crossroads Café* experimental learners in both experimental groups gained on average more than one SPL, although distance and hybrid scores did not differ from each other statistically. Findings in this analysis using SPL results are consistent with and reinforce the findings of the analyses using the individual BEST and CASAS Reading metrics separately.

CASAS Listening

CASAS Listening Test scores present gains of a lesser magnitude than those attained on the reading test. Applying an Analysis of Covariance, only distance students were found to have achieved significantly higher scores than did controls ($\bar{x} = 211.9$ adjusted for distance students versus $\bar{x}$ = 207.3 adjusted for controls (t = 3.43, p<.001). The adjusted means for hybrid and control students were virtually the same: $\bar{x}$ = 206.9 adjusted for hybrid students, $\bar{x}$ = 207.3 adjusted for controls. The difference in performance between hybrid and distance was pronounced (t = 2.95, p<.004). Only the gain by the distance learners of 3.72 SPL points approached the full CASAS 4 point threshold on the listening test. *(See Figure 30: CASAS Listening Unadjusted Mean Point Gains)*

This outcome was unexpected. Several factors could have affected these findings. For example, a larger proportion of hybrid students were from sites within the city in which the need to speak English most of the day was minimal, and, therefore, opportunities to practice English were limited. Although hybrid students had more structured opportunity to practice communicating in English, distance students' superiority in listening comprehension might have been a result of their exclusive reliance upon the telephone. This dependence may have been instrumental in honing their listening skills to a degree seldom demanded of students in the hybrid mode.

As noted earlier, scores on the listening test are subject to question because of the complexities inherent in a paper and pencil listening instrument. Moreover, a careful review of the administration of the CASAS listening test raises questions regarding the test's use. At several sites, the field conditions that were encountered interfered with the students' ability to hear the spoken directions and the accompanying audio tapes. While these conditions may have been consistent at both pre and post testing sessions and across conditions, the quality of the data collected was compromised.

The data also indicated that students with low pre-test CASAS Reading and BEST scores were more likely to withdraw from the study than those whose pre-test scores were high. This tendency was also operative in the listening component. Distance students who remained averaged at pre-testing 210.5 CASAS points. Those who left the study averaged only 206 points on the CASAS Listening at pre-testing. This 4.5 CASAS Listening mean point difference equals more than one full Student Performance Level (SPL). *(See Figure 30: CASAS Listening Unadjusted Mean Point Gains; See Table 2: Retention Rates by Test, Pre-Test Means, and Condition, page 33)*

Table 3. Unadjusted Mean Gains Reading and Listening All Conditions

Student Gains	Pre BEST Reading	Post BEST Reading	Gain	Pre Reading CASAS	Post Reading CASAS	Gain	Pre Listen CASAS	Post Listen CASAS	Gain
Hybrid	50.75	61.23	**10.48**	205.02	215.98	**10.96**	203.14	205.29	**2.45**
Distance	49.12	60.97	**11.81**	215.00	224.61	**9.61**	210.53	214.25	**3.72**
Control	44.62	50.74	6.12	208.89	213.40	4.51	206.69	207.10	0.41

Time in the Study

Originally, all experimental sites were scheduled to run for 26 weeks. However, this standard was difficult to sustain because of delayed starts at some sites and because of the need for increased numbers necessitated by the switch from the BEST to the CASAS. The summer hiatus, honored at many agencies, and the constraints imposed by NY State Education Department deadlines also limited the duration of the experimental period. Of the 15 participating experimental programs, ten ran for the expected 26 weeks or more; however, five programs were concluded prior to reaching their 26 week or 6 month goal. These five programs all ran for a minimum of thirteen weeks, some ran longer, but none to full term.

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All short cycle programs involved only students tested on the CASAS Battery, as BEST students were all among the first cohorts to enter the study and the full 26 week period was available for their programs. Only after BEST was replaced by CASAS and the need for additional subjects became apparent was a second initiative undertaken to increase numbers in the experimental conditions. These second initiative programs are those designated here as short cycle.

In reviewing the data collected from the fifteen sites, the ANCOVA analysis revealed that studying English with *Crossroads Café* even in a curtailed program enabled experimental students to score statistically significant greater gains on the CASAS reading battery than did controls ($\bar{x}$ = 220 adjusted means for short cycle students versus $\bar{x}$ = 213.37 adjusted for controls; t = 5.14, p<.000).

Unexpectedly, though, the data also revealed that on the CASAS Reading test, gains made by both full and short cycle groups when analyzed statistically did not differ significantly from each other ($\bar{x}$ = 219.9 adjusted for full term students versus $\bar{x}$ = 220.5 adjusted for short cycle students; see Table 4 below). Both short and full cycle LEP adults showed double the reading gains of controls. Short cycle students gained 9.61 CASAS points, and full term students gained 10.76 CASAS points. These mean gains are to be compared with control students, whose mean gain was 4.51 CASAS points, or less than half. *(See Figure 31: CASAS Reading Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration.)*

Table 4: CASAS Reading Test Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration

Duration of Program	CASAS Pre-Test Reading	CASAS Post-test Reading	Mean Gain Reading
Full Program	212.93	222.54	9.61
Short Cycle	207.43	218.19	10.76
Control	208.89	213.40	4.51

Table 5: CASAS Listening Test Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration

Duration of Program	CASAS Pre-Test Listening	CASAS Post-test Listening	Mean Gain Listening
Full Program	209.00	215.08	6.08
Short Cycle	205.03	206.07	1.04
Control	206.69	207.10	0.41

A *One-Way ANOVA* procedure was applied to the CASAS listening data to clarify the CASAS Listening *ANCOVA* results. This procedure compared gains attained by the controls with those attained by short cycle hybrid, full cycle hybrid, short cycle distance, and full cycle distance students on the CASAS Listening Test. The analysis confirmed that although both full distance and full hybrid students gained significantly more on the Listening test than did controls ($t = 3.18$, $p<.002$ and $t = 2.29$, $p<023$, respectively), short cycle student gains were not significantly greater than were the control gains.

CASAS listening adjusted post-test means for short cycle learners and controls did not differ statistically ($\bar{x} = 207.8$ versus $\bar{x} = 207.3$). These data suggest that language listening comprehension skills are acquired more slowly than English language reading proficiency. These outcomes also help to explain hybrid students' small gains on the CASAS Listening Test. *(See Table 5 and Figure 32: CASAS Listening Test Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration.)*

In the data reviewed regarding short cycle learners, the test scores seemed to indicate that English comprehension in reading seemed to be acquired more rapidly at the start of the program than later. The "learning curve" started at a steep slope and had flattened sufficiently by the thirteenth week to approximate the levels attained by the full cycle learners. These full and short cycle comparative data raise important questions regarding the most efficient use of *Crossroads*. The questions raised by these test data, supported by teacher assessments of student progress, warrant further study of comparative implementation of *Crossroads Café* interventions over time.

Of the 100 students at urban sites, 85 were hybrid; of those, 38 (45%) were enrolled in short cycle programs. Conversely, fewer than half, 7 of the 15 distance learners (48%), were located in urban sites, and 3 (20%) of the distance learners were in the shorter cycle. CASAS Listening test scores at urban sites were significantly lower than at rural or suburban sites ($t = 3.68$, $p<.000$). The adjusted post-test means on the CASAS Listening were $\bar{x} = 207.6$ for urban students as opposed to $\bar{x} = 214.8$ for rural and suburban students.

The poorer development of listening comprehension skills among hybrid students may be attributable to the combined effect of 1) a short cycle which limited the exposure to English usage, 2) an urban population within which hybrid students were much less likely to need to converse in English to "get through" each day, and 3) the extreme urban ethnic density situation reported by many hybrid learners that required no need for English at all to participate fully in the subject's immediate neighborhood each day. When assessing acquisition of language listening skills among experimental subjects, the impact of the conditions of local English daily use, which vary greatly from rural to urban sites, cannot be discounted.

Submitting data that seemed relevant to the acquisition of listening comprehension skills to a chi-square analysis revealed a significant relationship between students' responses of "yes or no" to their need to speak English and the characterization of their communities as urban or suburban/rural ($\chi^2 = 5.46$, $p<.02$). This relationship can be inferred also by the frequency with which urban participants reported that they lived in communities in which they had no need to speak English during the day. *(See Figure 18: English Spoken Daily by Students.)*

Moreover, newest immigrants seem likely to reside in these urban homogeneous enclaves and have less need and fewer opportunities to speak English during the day. With listening comprehension skills apparently requiring a longer period of time to acquire among urban ESOL populations and with the isolation that is too often imposed upon urban adult ESOL students, these findings suggest that urban ESOL programs need to provide extended periods of time for practicing both listening and speaking English.

Gains Based upon Pre-Test CASAS Levels

In an effort to determine optimum use of the *Crossroads Café* materials on the basis of students' starting levels, students were divided into low, middle, and high groups on the basis of their initial CASAS Reading pre-test scores. Those scoring below 200 were categorized as the "low group;" those scoring between 201 and 220 were categorized as the middle group; and high students were those scoring 221 and above.

For CASAS Reading, those who pre-tested low made the largest gains when compared to controls. Though not as large, high learners gained more than those in the middle group. *(See Figure 33: Unadjusted Mean Gains in CASAS Reading Points by Initial Proficiency Level.)* On the CASAS Listening Test all participants categorized as "low" made equal gains regardless of condition. For middle level learners, only distance students had positive gains on the listening test. Insufficient high level listening test data precluded drawing additional inferences. *(See Figure 30: CASAS Listening Unadjusted Mean Point Gains)*

The association between initial level of English proficiency and gains made during the experimental period warrants further study. As shown in the retention data, those who scored very low did not remain in the program. Yet, those whose scores were only somewhat higher achieved the greatest gains in both experimental conditions. *Crossroads Café's* strength may lie in the power of its initial impact on LEP students, whose threshold levels of English meet the minimal standards for use of *Crossroads*.

Teacher Ratings

For each of five units of study, designed to be evenly inter-spaced over the 26 week period, teachers were asked to assign each student two ratings:

- How well did the student understand the video, and
- How able was the student to express verbally his/her understanding of the video.

A five point rating scale was used, in which "5" indicated excellent understanding of the video or excellent verbal expression of understanding, and "1" reflected hardly any understanding of the video or very poor verbal expression of understanding. During the 26 week period, teachers' ratings were expected to provide a record of the rate of improvement in the students' understanding of the videos and their ability to express verbally that understanding both for hybrid and distance learners. Of course, logs were not completed for or by controls.

Analyses of ratings by teachers of students' work over five time periods using a repeated measures general linear model found that teachers' ratings of students' understanding of the *Crossroads* videos did on average increase over time ($F = 4.82$, $p<.001$). Teachers also found that students' ability to express verbally their understanding of the videos improved over time ($F = 6.57$, $p<.000$). Further, both of the trend lines followed a linear path of growth ($F = 11.02$, $p<.002$ and $F = 13.84$, $p<.000$) for both understanding and verbal expression. *(See Figure 34: Mean Ratings by Teachers of Students' Understanding of Videos; and Figure 35: Mean Ratings by Teachers of Students' Verbal Expression.)*

However, when these ratings were examined by condition, the trend for distance students continued to rise over time while ratings for hybrid students remained essentially flat. Teachers' ratings of students showed not only a significant difference of mean scores between distance and hybrid condition ($F = 5.76$, $p<.02$), but their rate of improvement also varied significantly by condition. ($F = 6.06$, $p< .000$). The slope of the curve indicates that while the trend for distance students was as expected, the ratings for hybrid students remained basically flat. *(See Figures 34 and 35.)*

While not statistically significant,[43] the trend for verbal expression of understanding also shows the same pattern in *Figure 35*. This flat trend among hybrid ratings contradicts the moderate pre and post-test correlations found between teacher ratings and the pre and post test scores. *(See Table 6, page 54.)* This contradiction may be explained by the comparatively small number of Teacher Logs completed during the experimental period.

The ratings comparing hybrid and distance students by teachers on Teacher Logs were derived differently. Teachers working with distance learners were limited to information about their students that reached them only by telephone conversation and from material received by mail and rarely worked face to face with students. Teachers working in the hybrid mode met their students either singly or in small groups on a regular basis. Teachers had the help of reading student body language, responding to facial and hand expressions, and developing unique personal relationships with their students.

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[43] Since the repeated measures program only uses students with a complete set of data, the N's were small. Only 37 hybrid and 21 distance students were included. With increased N's, the interaction effect might have been significant.

Although hybrid cues certainly affected the teachers' rating processes to some degree and the absence of these cues played some role for the teachers in the distance mode, the comparatively strong correlations between the test scores and the teachers' judgment in both experimental conditions are notable. Teachers working in the distance condition may have compensated for the lack of direct cues by recognizing the greater improvement among distance learners of their listening skills.

Correlations between Teacher Evaluation and Test Scores

To determine the degree of overlap between teacher ratings and test scores, correlation analyses were run. The agreement between teacher ratings and test scores was moderate, but the correlations were statistically significant. *(See Figure 36: Coefficient of Correlation between Teachers' Ratings and Pre and Post Test Scores.)*

Table 6. Coefficient of Correlation between Teachers' Ratings and Pre and Post Test Scores

	Understanding the Video		Ability to Express Understanding in English	
	Log 1 / Pre	Log 5 / Post	Log 1 / Pre	Log 5 / Post
BEST Reading	0.43	0.37	0.39	0.27
CASAS Reading	0.56	0.77	0.53	0.68
CASAS Listening	0.61	0.47	0.65	0.40

The first set of teacher ratings on Log 1 of student understanding of the video and the student's ability to express verbally that understanding were correlated with pre-test scores on the BEST and CASAS Reading and Listening respectively. Similarly, the last set of teacher ratings on Log 5 of the student's understanding of the video and his/her ability to express verbally that understanding were correlated with post-test scores on the BEST and CASAS Reading and Listening.

This correlation validated a teacher and test score overlap — teacher ratings and tests were on the same track — yet indicated that both were also measuring an unique element of student achievement. The teacher ratings themselves were highly inter-correlated ($r = .78$, $p<.000$) and may be measuring fairly similar aspects of student understanding.

The generally moderate correlation between teachers' independent subjective evaluations and standardized test scores is noteworthy, implying that teacher ratings have utility in assessing student progress on *Crossroads Café*.

As both hybrid and distance students' statistically significant improvement on the BEST and CASAS Reading tests correlated comparatively well with teachers' assessments, these correlations help to inform the debate about using professional teachers' judgments as opposed to relying entirely upon "objective" assessments. *(See Figure 36: Coefficient of Correlation between Teachers' Ratings and Pre and Post Test Scores.)*

Teacher feedback on rating instruments did reveal a degree of discomfort among instructors regarding the subjective scales employed. Whether the teachers' discomfort arose from a poorly designed log format or from teachers' insufficient training in assessing student progress, the use of logs is an area worthy of further investigation.

As discussed in the next section, student logs are, perhaps, even less reliable as collectors of experimental data. These logs, though often necessary and perhaps even indispensable, require more study and refinement before they can be considered truly reliable research instruments. In this study, data gleaned from student logs were often ambiguous. (Please see section "Studying Behaviors," page 59.)

Student Ratings

At pre and post-testing sessions, students were asked to rate themselves and their own abilities in the following categories:

- How comfortable they felt while speaking English on the telephone;
- How well they understood English language radio;
- How well they understood English language television; and
- How much confidence they had in their English language skills.

Once more a five point scale was used. The number "1" represented the smallest degree of comfort, understanding, or confidence through number "5" which represented the highest degree of comfort, understanding or confidence. Participants also had the option of selecting "I do not speak English on the telephone" or "I do not listen to or watch English language radio or television."

To determine that the four categories of student ratings listed above were evaluating unique aspects of the students' experiences, correlational analyses were run on the post-course student ratings of their English language comfort levels. All post-course student ratings were found to be inter-correlated, but that inter-correlation was at a sufficiently low level as to preclude the likelihood that all four questions were measuring the same skill or ability. A Pearson Correlation analysis generated the correlations appearing in Table 7.

Correlations between the rating scales ranged from r = .32 for comfort on the telephone and confidence in English language skills to r = .81 for understanding English language radio and understanding English language television. (*See Figure 37: Unadjusted*

Mean Gains in Student Ratings of Telephone Comfort Level; and see Figure 38: Unadjusted Mean Gains in Student Ratings of Radio/TV Listening Comfort.)

Table 7: Multiple Correlations of Perceived Comfort Levels

Comfort Level Correlations		English Language Confidence	English on the Telephone	Listening to English Radio	Watching English Language TV
Confidence English Language Skills	Correlation	1.000	*.322	*.634	*.615
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	214	185	192	205
Speaking English on the Telephone	Correlation	*.322	1.000	*.402	*.355
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	185	199	180	189
Listening to English Language Radio	Correlation	*.634	*.402	1.000	*.807
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	192	180	207	199
Listening to English Language TV	Correlation	*.615	*.355	*.807	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	205	189	199	217

When comparing pre and post-test student ratings, researchers hypothesized that distance and hybrid students would emerge with significantly higher ratings on all scales as compared to controls. ANCOVA analyses were used to test this hypothesis with initial pre-course participant ratings controlled. Distance and hybrid post-test student ratings were significantly higher than controls in level of comfort on the telephone (t = 2.56, p<.011) and in understanding of English language radio (t = 2.14, p<.03). Adjusted post-course means of these student comfort level ratings on a scale of 1 to 5 were as follows:

Comfort on the Phone		Comfort Listening to English Language Radio	
Control . . .	2.80	Control	2.59
Hybrid	3.45	Hybrid	2.70
Distance . .	3.10	Distance	2.85

The adjusted post-test means of these two rating scales seem to be tapping into purely aural understanding. To explore further the lack of significance of the other two scales, "Confidence in English Usage" and "Watching English TV," length of time in the study was entered into the model. Not surprisingly, degree of confidence, a variable usually resistant to short-term change, increased only for students studying for a full cycle *(See Figure 39: Post-Test Student Ratings of Confidence in English Usage.)* This "Increase in Confidence" did not change in different ways across the three experimental conditions. *(See Figure 40: Students' Perceived Mean Gains in English Proficiency.)*

As with teacher ratings, correlations between student rating scales and test scores were also evaluated. The degree of overlap between student and test measures was examined. The analysis revealed little or no correlation between the students' pre-test ratings of their own English language skills with pre-test BEST or pre-test CASAS scores. One small statistically significant correlation between level of understanding of English language television and CASAS Listening ($r = .23$, $p<.009$) was discovered.

Small but statistically significant correlations also were found between participants' post-test perceived level of understanding of English language radio and television and the post-test CASAS scores. These correlations ranged from $r = .22$ to $r = .38$. Confidence level in using English was related only to post-test BEST scores with a small correlation of $r = .24$. The data revealed student ratings overlapped only to a small degree with test scores. These weak correlations indicate that students seemed to be measuring different components of student success rather than those assessed by the BEST and CASAS.

Finally, correlations between post-test student ratings and teacher ratings were perused. The nature of the correlation can help assess the degree to which teachers and students are measuring the same perceptions and the same behaviors.

Table 8. Correlations between Students' Self Assessment and Teacher Ratings — Post-Test

	Understanding the Videos	Ability to Express Verbally that Understanding
Confidence in English Skills	.34	.42
Comfort on the Phone	.05*	.14*
Understanding English Radio	.30	.38
Understanding English TV	.25	.31
English Improvement	.35	.41

* Not Significant

Small to moderate statistically significant correlations were found for all possible relations, except for the students' level of comfort on the telephone. *(See Table 8.)* Statistically significant correlations ranging from r = .25 to r = .42 seem to indicate that, although the two sets of ratings overlap somewhat, teachers' and students' ratings reflect different perceptions of student abilities and behaviors.

Studying Behaviors

Time on Task

A common hypothesis at the start of the study was that as students studied more (more time-on-task) and as the amount of teacher contact with students increased, more learning would occur as measured by the BEST or CASAS Battery and by other meaningful life style changes. An expectation also was that those with greater initial English proficiency would progress more rapidly in their mastery of English than those whose initial proficiency in English was less developed.

To test these hypotheses, several measures to study student behavior were included on the student and teacher logs. Among other items, students were asked to record on each of their five logs the following data:

- ○ The total number of minutes the student watched each video,
- ○ The total number of minutes the student worked in the *Worktext* or *Photo Stories*,
- ○ The number of minutes the student spent working with a partner, and
- ○ The number of times the student watched the complete video.

Teacher Logs were used to compile information regarding contact hours. Teachers were asked among other items to record:

- ○ The number of minutes of interaction either in person or by phone between the student and teacher that took place for each of the units reported.

The means of these values were calculated for each of the five categories and a regression analysis was run for the BEST, for the CASAS Reading, and for the CASAS Listening Tests.[44] The analyses, essentially, found that none of these time-on-task variables was statistically related to student achievement, except that the mean number of minutes spent working with a partner had a negative relationship with the CASAS Listening Test. However, in practical terms, the B coefficient was so small as to be negligible. (B = -.014)

In an effort to explain the absence of a time-on-task effect, the Student Logs were reviewed carefully. Evidence surfaced that the Student Logs were probably difficult for LEP students to complete. When the data were examined, inconsistencies among the responses were obvious. Student Logs reporting multiple viewings of a video often indicated virtually no minutes spent watching the video. Conversely, on one log, a report of eight complete viewings was accompanied by 3500 minutes of watching time.

In response to the question regarding identification of a partner, students could select, "I did not work with a partner this week." If they selected this response, they should also have logged zero (0) minutes working with a partner. However, many students provided discrepant responses for these items. The review revealed that on Student Log 1 alone, eighteen (18) students reported that they did not work with a partner, but four (4) of them had logged significant partner minutes for the same unit.

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[44] The forward stepwise selection method was used and the pre-test score controlled for different levels of initial ability.

Strong correlations greater than .85 would have been expected between the items cited which, in effect, are internal checks upon reporting accuracy, such as the number of times a complete video was watched and the number of minutes spent watching it. However, these correlations were absent. For each student log, correlations between these variables ranged from r =.26 and r =.76.

Trying a different method to uncover correlations, student log reports of time-on-task were segregated into three levels. "Low" represented a student spending very little time studying; "middle" was average time-on-task; and "high" represented students studying a great deal. Even this analysis did not prove fruitful. In fact, in correlation analyses, time-on-task variables were unrelated to teacher or student ratings. The data compiled from Student Logs must, in almost all situations, remain suspect.

While not related to student achievement, more confidence can be placed in the accuracy of teacher contact data. A review of teacher contact minutes[45] revealed that hybrid students worked significantly more with their teachers than did distance learners. (F = 36.13, p<.000) The data disclosed also that for hybrid students, teacher contact minutes decreased through the experimental period. (F = 27.4, p<.000) The trend line for hybrid students showed a negative slope while the trend line for distance students stayed essentially flat. (F = 10.12, p<.000) *(See Figure 41: Mean Student-Teacher Contact Minutes by Log.)*

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[45] These results are based on those learners with a complete set of the five logs. This may be a special subset of this population and not representative.

The negative slope in teacher contact minutes for hybrid students might have been anticipated. Hybrid students met with their teachers at schools or at other sites in the community only at pre-scheduled times, while distance students contacted their instructors by telephone at times chosen as mutually convenient to both. As hybrid students gained confidence with *Crossroads Café* materials and as their English improved, their ability to study independently increased; thus, their need for direct teacher contact would have diminished. Therefore, reduced teacher contact for hybrid students may be a manifestation of the inconvenience of attending pre-scheduled instructional sessions combined with the student's increased ability to study independently.

Conversely, the flat slope starting with fewer contact minutes reported on logs for distance students may reflect the realistic constraints of contact limited to the telephone. If the 275 minutes that hybrid learners on average spent with a teacher at the start, as shown in column 1 of *Figure 41*, represent an approximate optimum period necessary to familiarize students with *Crossroads*, then distance learners might have benefitted as well from such an experience.

However, the opportunity to spend that much time with an instructor on the phone is constrained for distance learners by how often one can get to a phone, when a teacher can get to a phone, how long one can stay on a phone, and the students' perceived value of the telephone interaction. The average of approximately one hour on the phone with a teacher for each unit remained constant throughout and may represent a realistic amount of time a distance learner may expect to work with a teacher in the distance learning mode. At best, therefore, the slope for hybrid learners appears to flatten out at about two hours; for distance learners, one hour seems to be the operational mean.

Problems that Interfered with Studying

For each log, teachers were asked to record problems mentioned by students which interfered with studying. *(See Figures 42: Problems Interfering with Studying — All Students.)* Among the 195 responses, work was the most frequently mentioned problem. Other categories selected with some regularity were illness, transportation, lack of time, family problems, childcare. Lack of interest and depression were rarely chosen. Distance learners cited transportation as a problem once compared to 15 citations by hybrid learners. Childcare was noted five times by distance learners as opposed to 12 by hybrid students, reflecting the need for hybrid students to travel from home to meet with a teacher.[46] Rarer reasons mentioned included a broken VCR, studying for and the need to get a driver's license, need for glasses, inability to understand the accents of the characters in the video, moved, had a baby, and travel.

Choice of Partners and Family Literacy

For each student log, students were asked: "Did you watch the Video with your family? Yes or No." Not unexpectedly, across both learning conditions, a majority of students watched the videos with their families. For all five logs, 274 (67.8%) of 404 hybrid student responses indicated that students had watched the videos with their families. Among distance learning students, the percentage watching with their families was even higher, 113 positive (80.1%) of 141 responses. *(See Figure 43: Percent of Students Watching Videos with Families by Log, and Figure 44: Total Responses All 5 Logs – Percent of Students Watching Videos with Families.)*

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[46] Note that the N's for distance responses were small, so that only tentative conclusions can be drawn.

On each log, students were asked: "Who was your partner this week? Select as many as apply." Of the 360 responses covering all five logs, students selected their children, spouses, and other family members as partners 54.2% of the time. Among distance learners, children and family members served as partners 55.9% of the time, while 49.3% of hybrid students chose children and family members. Hybrid and distance learners turned to friends and colleagues at almost the same frequency, 26.7% to 22.5%, but both chose children and relatives as partners 54.2% of the of the time.

When selecting partners with whom to work, the adult LEP students selected their own children 41.9% of the time, far more than any other choice. The next most frequent choice for partner, 16.3% of the time, was a relative other than an offspring. (*See Figures 45, 46, and 47 for Choice of Partners: Hybrid, Distance, and Combined.*) Clearly, the students' families played a prominent role in the English acquisition efforts of the LEP adults. Based upon these data, *Crossroads Café* should not be overlooked as an important intervention in the effort to develop full family literacy.

The fact that so many learners in the experimental conditions sought a group learning experience contradicts the orthodox view of non-traditional learners. Those who, historically, sought to learn via correspondence or other at-home studies have consistently been categorized as "loners, inner or self motivated, and self-sufficient" learners. The instructional methods applied were designed to accommodate this "style" of learning.

The findings in this study describe students with a different makeup. The high percentage of family viewing and frequent studying with partners indicate that adult ESL learners do not fit the pattern of traditional independent learners. Adult LEP students tend to establish social conditions for learning despite the absence of a classroom experience. They tend to seek out members of their immediate family or others with whom to watch the videos and to learn English in a mutually supportive context.

Although many LEP adults may succeed on their own, the data suggest that creating a "virtual classroom" promises greater benefits for them in *Crossroads Cafe* and in similar non-traditional educational settings. Therefore, instructional methods need to be devised to create a sense of partnership and belonging, of group effort and activity, of mutual help and understanding among LEP adults that offer the social support they apparently seek. The advantages of doing so will be measured in reduced attrition, higher test scores, and enhanced self-worth. These indications also bode well for the use of *Crossroads* as an important intervention in the development of full family literacy.

Post-Test Data Collection

At post-testing, 237 (86.8%) participants completed the Follow-up Background Information Form. Students were asked to report their study activities, assess whether or not their mastery of English had improved, and report changes in their employment status. They were asked whether or not they would attribute these changes to improved English language skills.

Control students were asked to report on their English language acquisition activities during the experimental period. In accordance with our request and with the research protocols, none of them reported attending classes or studying English formally with *Crossroads Café* or with any other structured program during the experimental period. *(See Figure 2: Learning Activities Prior to Crossroads as Reported by Retained Students.)*

On the Follow-up Background Information Form, distance and hybrid students also judged improvement of their English language skills on a five point scale by an adjusted average of 1.4 points for distance learners and .98 for the hybrid group. This perceived growth in language proficiency for the experimental groups compares favorably with the .30 of a grade perceived by controls for the same period. *(See Figure 39 and Figure 40.)* These differences are statistically significant. (F=12.87, p<.000). Of 237 responding, 95.9% said they intended to continue studying English.

The data regarding employment status revealed the following information about the hybrid and distance learning adult ESOL program participants:

Of the 237 respondents,

- 59.9% (142) reported that they currently had paying jobs. Of these:
    - ○ 29.2% said they had gotten a raise or promotion, and
        - 72.7% of hybrid students attributed their raise or promotion to improved English language skills;
        - 91.7% of distance students attributed their raise or promotion to improved English language skills; and
        - 60% of control students attributed their raise or promotion to improved English language skills.
    - ○ 19.5% indicated they had gotten a new job. Of these:
        - 77.8% of hybrid students attributed a new job because of improved English language skills;
        - 75% of distance students thought they got a new job because of improved English language skills;

  - 63.6% of controls thought they got a new job because of improved English language skills;

Of the 142 reporting that they were employed,

- 19.5% indicated that they had gotten a new job during the experimental period.
  - 81% of the newly employed rated their new job as better than their previous job, and
  - 73.9% of the newly employed felt that they had acquired their new jobs because of their improved language proficiency.

When these results are broken down by condition, *(See Figure 48: Employment Changes Attributed by Students to Improved English.)*

- Hybrid learners (72.7%) attributed their pay raises to their improved English proficiency,
- Distance learners cited improved English even more consistently (91.7%), and
- Controls felt that their raises were the result of improved English language skills only 60% of the time.

Acquisition of new and better jobs was also more frequently attributed to improved English skills by *Crossroad* learners:

- Hybrid learners cited improved English 77.8% of the time,
- Distance learners cited improved English 75% of the time, and
- Controls cited improved English 63.6% of the time.

A difference among groups was that both hybrid and distance learners more frequently attributed these positive events to improved English language proficiency.

Discussion

This impact study compared three groups: control, and two experimental groups, hybrid and distance. Following an experimental period of at least 13 weeks, multiple outcomes of student success were measured. Hybrid and distance learners studied English using only *Crossroads Café* materials; controls did not formally study English either in the classroom or with *Crossroads Café*. The performance of hybrid and distance learners on standardized tests of English language proficiency and on other pre-defined outcomes was compared to performance by controls.

Just over 57% of those who were originally tested were retained for post-testing. Issues contributing to attrition can be grouped into three general areas: 1) difficulties that developed because of local factors and teacher turnover that were essentially site specific, 2) programmatic-related concerns, and 3) low pre-test scores and experimental condition.[47] Unfortunately, issues that tended to elevate attrition were seldom isolated and discrete. The complex interaction among the contributing factors confounded the identification of most direct "cause and effect" relationships. For example, a differential loss of students may be attributed in part to a site's peculiarities and/or to student background characteristics. The degree to which either or both cause the loss of a student lies beyond the scope of quantitative analysis. In effect, programmatic recommendations emerge from an insightful model built upon collected data and upon quantitative methods that reveal salient tendencies, likelihoods, and effects.

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[47] In inferential analysis, missing data raises concerns about the "quality" of the estimates. That is, are they biased or unbiased? As long as attrition is only related to pre-test scores and experimental condition, unbiased estimates can still be calculated and statistical analyses can be carried out using listwise deletion. If other variables are related to attrition, but not related to the post-test scores, again unbiased estimates can still be calculated and statistical analyses can be carried out using listwise deletion.

Program Accessibility and Achievement

In any educational undertaking designed to serve adults, the program must be accessible to students, deemed worthy of their time and effort, and provide them a sense of achievement. Although these conditions seem outwardly straightforward, in reality they become quite complex. The word "accessible" assumes different meanings for men and women, for single and married students, for women with small children, for men with small children, for those who are employed, and for those without jobs, as well as for many others too diverse to enumerate. Moreover, accessibility is a "sometime thing." What may be accessible today may not be so tomorrow.

Confronting all of the negative influences is the sense of achievement. Adult students may be more comfortable with delayed gratification than are children; but, within the context of daily negative pressures, evidence of accomplishment and progress reinforces commitment. As for all others, opportunities for immediate, rather than delayed, gratification needs to become an integral part of every adult ESOL program.

Assignment to Condition

In addition, as far as possible, the participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions, and thus the sample is probably representative of the New York State LEP population. In fact, this impact study's sample mirrored a typical, diverse LEP, ESOL population according to a study by Rudes and Stempleski.[48]

Study Population

This Impact Study sample mirrored a typical diverse LEP ESOL population.[49] While students originated from many different countries, the preponderance were from Hispanic backgrounds. Peoples of Asian and Slavic/Eastern European heritage were also well represented in the sample. The proportion of representation in our sample reflected those from the US Census (1990).

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[48] Rudes and Stempleski, 1997. See also the Introduction of this Report.

[49] Rudes and Stempleski, 1997. See also the introduction to this report.

- More than 60% of the participants were female,
- Most were between 30 and 49 years old, and
- Almost half (49.6%) had at least a high school education.

Members of the group had multiple responsibilities:

- They had young children in their homes (64.6%);
- They had other adult relatives living with them (44.8%); and
- They worked (51.9%).

Many participants were not required to speak English in their everyday life.

- The median number of hours speaking English per day was 2; and
- More than half (53.9%) indicated they could get by each day without speaking English at all.

Outcomes

Outcomes support the use of *Crossroads Café* in both hybrid and distance learning modalities. *Crossroads Café* learners scored significantly higher than control participants on several measures of student success:

- *Crossroads Café* learners improved their English language proficiency compared to gains made by controls to a statistically significant level as measured by the BEST and CASAS Reading tests;
- *Crossroads Café* learners exhibited higher levels of comfort speaking English on the telephone and higher levels of understanding English language radio as measured by student ratings;
- Learners in the distance condition improved their listening comprehension as measured by CASAS Listening test;
- *Crossroads Café* reading gains emerged for learners studying for both a short and full cycle while listening gains appeared only for learners studying for a full cycle as measured by CASAS Reading and CASAS Listening tests;

- *Crossroads Café* learners studying for 26 weeks or more improved their listening comprehension as measured by CASAS Listening test; and
- Learners in the distance condition showed improved levels of understanding the video and being able to verbally express that understanding as measured by teacher ratings.

Some surprising and perplexing results also came out of the analyses. Urban participants scored more poorly on CASAS Listening than rural or suburban participants. Hybrid students did not show improved levels of understanding and expressing that understanding as measured by teacher ratings. No statistical relationship between the time on task variables and student achievement was evident.

As discussed in the "Research History" section of this report, a few studies had already been conducted on *Crossroads Café*.[50] In all cases, results positively supported intervention with *Crossroads Café*. However, those studies reported small sample sizes, short durations, limited sampling of the materials and absence of comparison groups. Since then, a National Pilot Study[51] was conducted. This study also revealed positive outcomes as measured by CASAS Reading and Listening tests. The outcomes discussed in this Impact Study support and strengthen the conclusions derived from other studies. Given random assignment of participants to experimental condition and comparison groups, a recommendation for using *Crossroads Café* program of study as an instructional intervention for LEP adults can be made with a high degree of confidence.

Ultimately, however, the strength of any study rests on the reliability and validity of its measuring instruments. Both the BEST and CASAS tests present strengths and weaknesses. Both are criterion-referenced, standardized tests. Both test skills and abilities required in everyday life. Both are easy, though time consuming, to administer. Generally, teachers gave positive feedback on the tests.

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[50] Johnston, Brzezinski and Stites, 1996; Brzezinski and Leitner, 1996; McLean, 1997.

[51] Rudes, Zehler, Hopstock and Stephenson, 1999.

However, neither test can assess the richness inherent in a program of learning like Crossroads Café. A more in-depth comparison of the tests would be informative, one that provided easy item analyses that would assess actual content and competencies. Both tests, written in the 1980's, probably could be updated.

As assessment is a necessary element in LEP/ESOL programs, further research is warranted in this area. While a more appropriate measure for this population of students is lacking, researchers at Educational Testing Service have been developing a theory-based English language test (TOEFL) by applying theories of communicative competence. (Henning & Cascallar, 1992; Chapelle et. al, 1997; Douglas & Smith, 1997; Duran et. al, 1985). While BEST and CASAS are not academic tests, and should not be, test design optimally relies on results of cognitive and field research.

This study's results clearly highlighted the problems inherent in collecting logs of teacher and student ratings. Ratings offer another valuable way of measuring the construct of "student success," but much work needs to be done to increase the reliability of these measures.

Conclusions

The data collected as part of this *Crossroads Café* Impact Study were from two different sources and were of two distinct types. The first data were "objective" scores generated by pre and post standardized tests; the second were responses collected from more "subjective" teacher and student ratings of achievement and impact recorded on pre and post program student surveys and Teacher and Student Logs. Data collected from standardized tests were more supportive, while self-reported data were relatively less supportive of *Crossroads Café*'s value as an educational intervention for LEP adults in non-traditional settings.

Standardized Test Results

Achievement data from the reading components of the BEST and the CASAS Battery, as well as Student Performance Level (SPL) analyses, documented significant and robust gains in performance by *Crossroads Café* learners when compared with gains by controls. Gains in reading achievement in both hybrid and distance conditions as measured by two independent measures, the BEST and the CASAS, were found to be sufficiently large to be of practical significance.

However, data from the CASAS Listening pre and post tests supported *Crossroads Café* only in the distance experimental condition. *Crossroads Café* may be less useful as an intervention for improving listening skills generally. However, at several sites, the field conditions that were encountered interfered with the students' ability to hear the spoken directions and the accompanying audio tapes. Therefore, conclusions regarding the listening variable may be confounded by the quality of the data collected.

Teacher and Student Ratings

A respectable body of data generated by the teachers and students support the BEST and the CASAS test results. Teacher ratings of students' understanding and verbal expression, students' assessments of improvements in their own communications and every day life skills, and the students' reports of changes in their employment all reinforce the conclusion that *Crossroads Café* is an effective educational intervention for LEP adults under the experimental conditions. Although these findings were neither as definitive nor as robust as the test score gains and no discernible pattern appeared favoring one experimental condition over the other, the reported data did support the *Crossroads Cafe* intervention. These teacher and student surveys, while reflecting the imprecision inherent in collecting and using self-reported data, were, nonetheless, useful ancillary sources of information that reinforced test score findings.

Implications for Family Literacy

Finally, analysis of the data revealed extensive use of *Crossroads Café* in learning situations involving family members, especially children. An unexpected advantage offered by *Crossroads Café* may be its use in family literacy initiatives.

Crossroads Café Impact Evaluation Study

Graphic Presentations

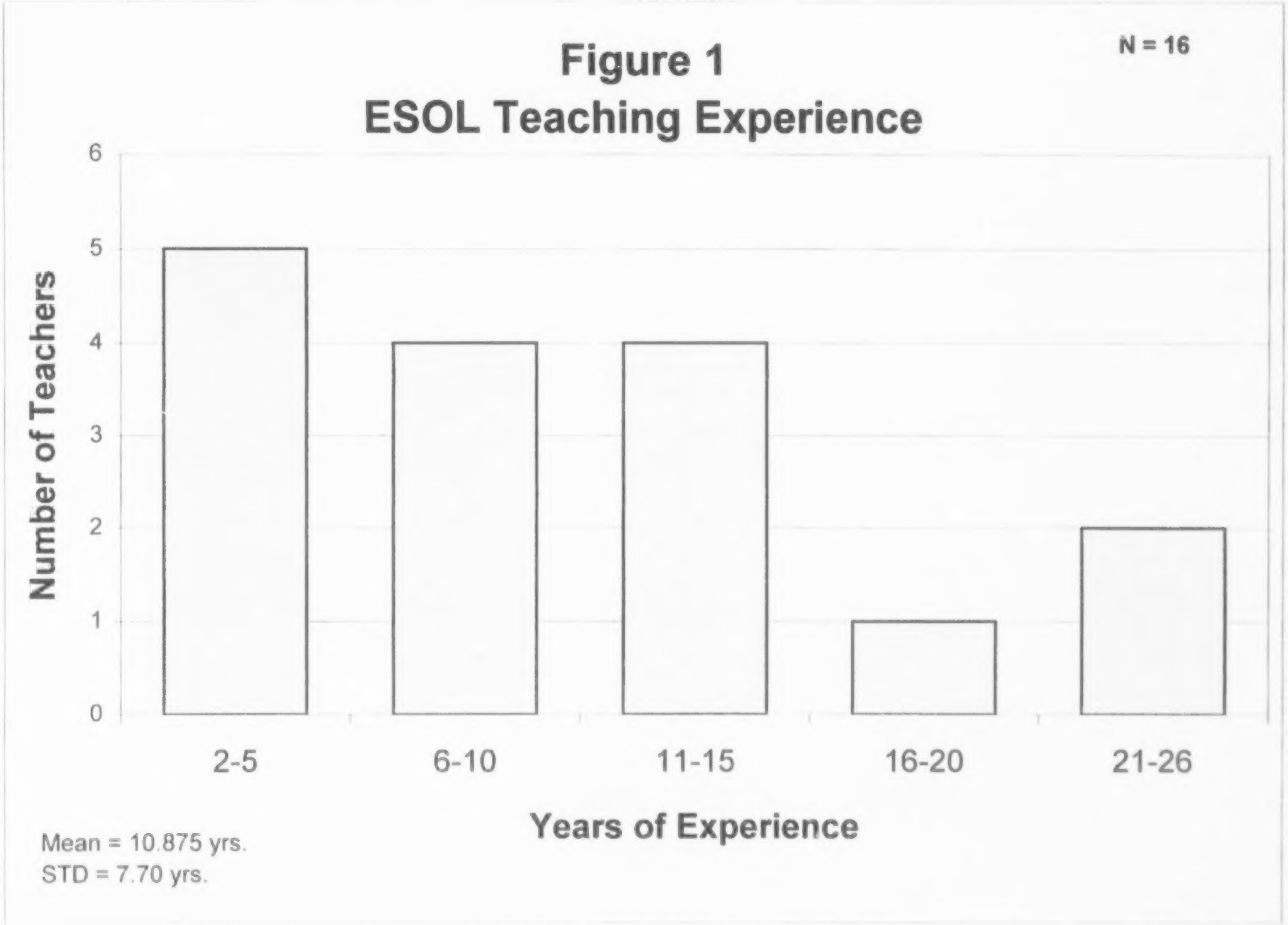
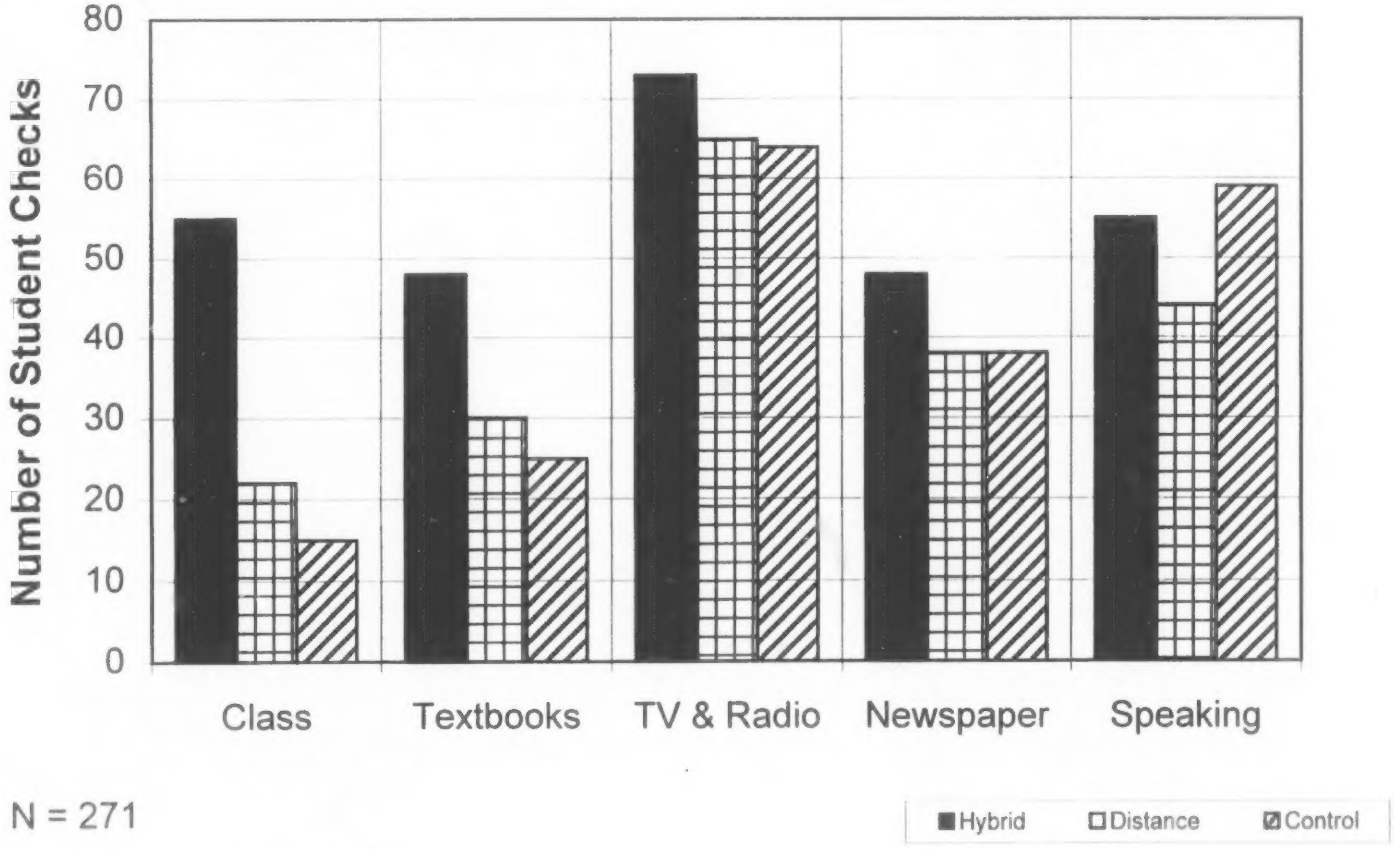


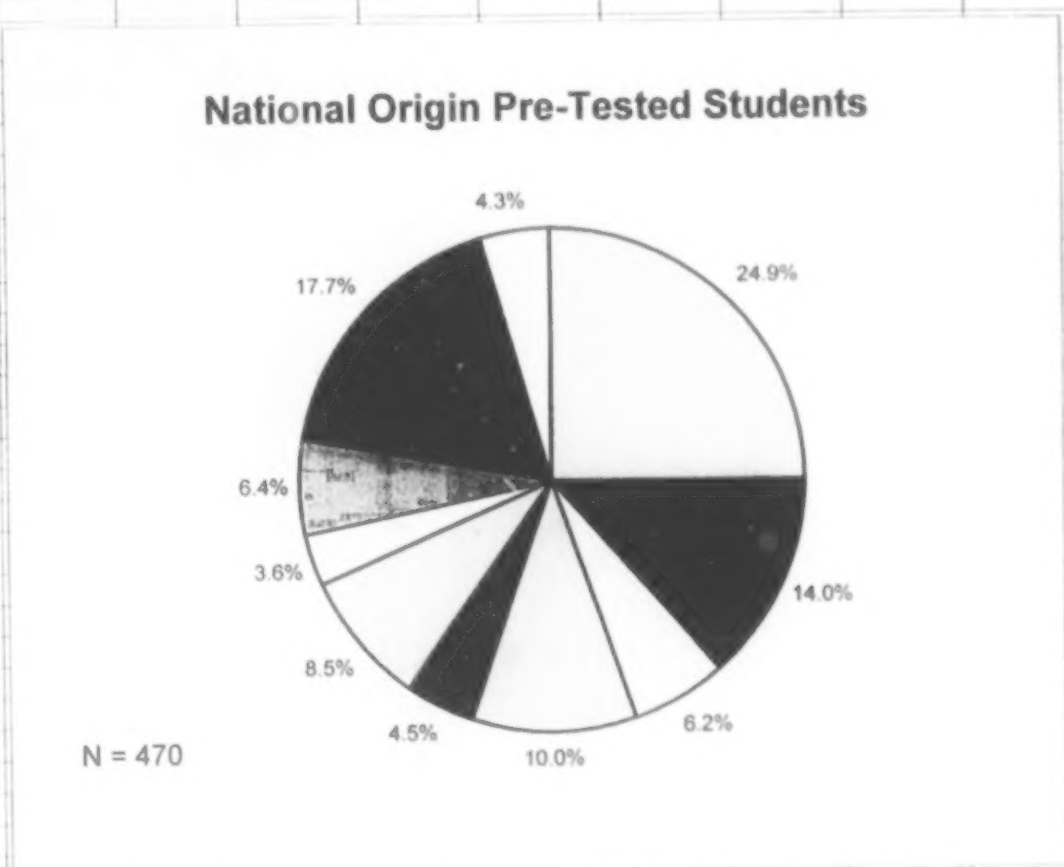
Figure 1
ESOL Teaching Experience

Figure 2
Learning Activities Prior to Crossroads As Reported by Retained Students



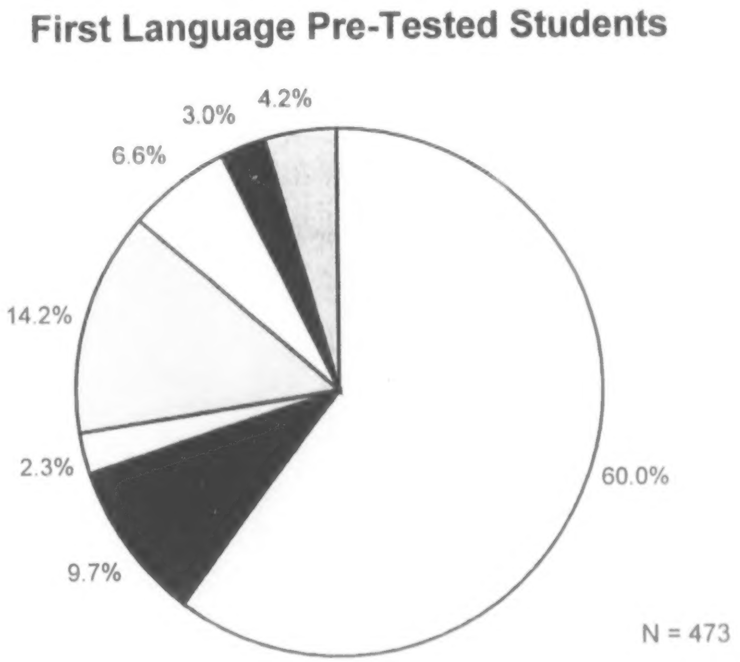
National Origin		
Dominican Republic	117	24.9%
Puerto Rico	66	14.0%
Central America	29	6.2%
South America	47	10.0%
Mexico	21	4.5%
China	40	8.5%
Other Asian	17	3.6%
Haiti	30	6.4%
Slavic & Eastern Europe	83	17.7%
Other	20	4.3%
TOTAL	470	100.0%

Figure 3



Languages		
Spanish	284	60.0%
Chinese	46	9.7%
Asian	11	2.3%
Russian	67	14.2%
Haitian Creole	31	6.6%
Slavic	14	3.0%
Other	20	4.2%
TOTAL	473	100.0%

Figure 4



First Language Pre-Tested Students

Figure 5
Years of Formal Education before Emigrating

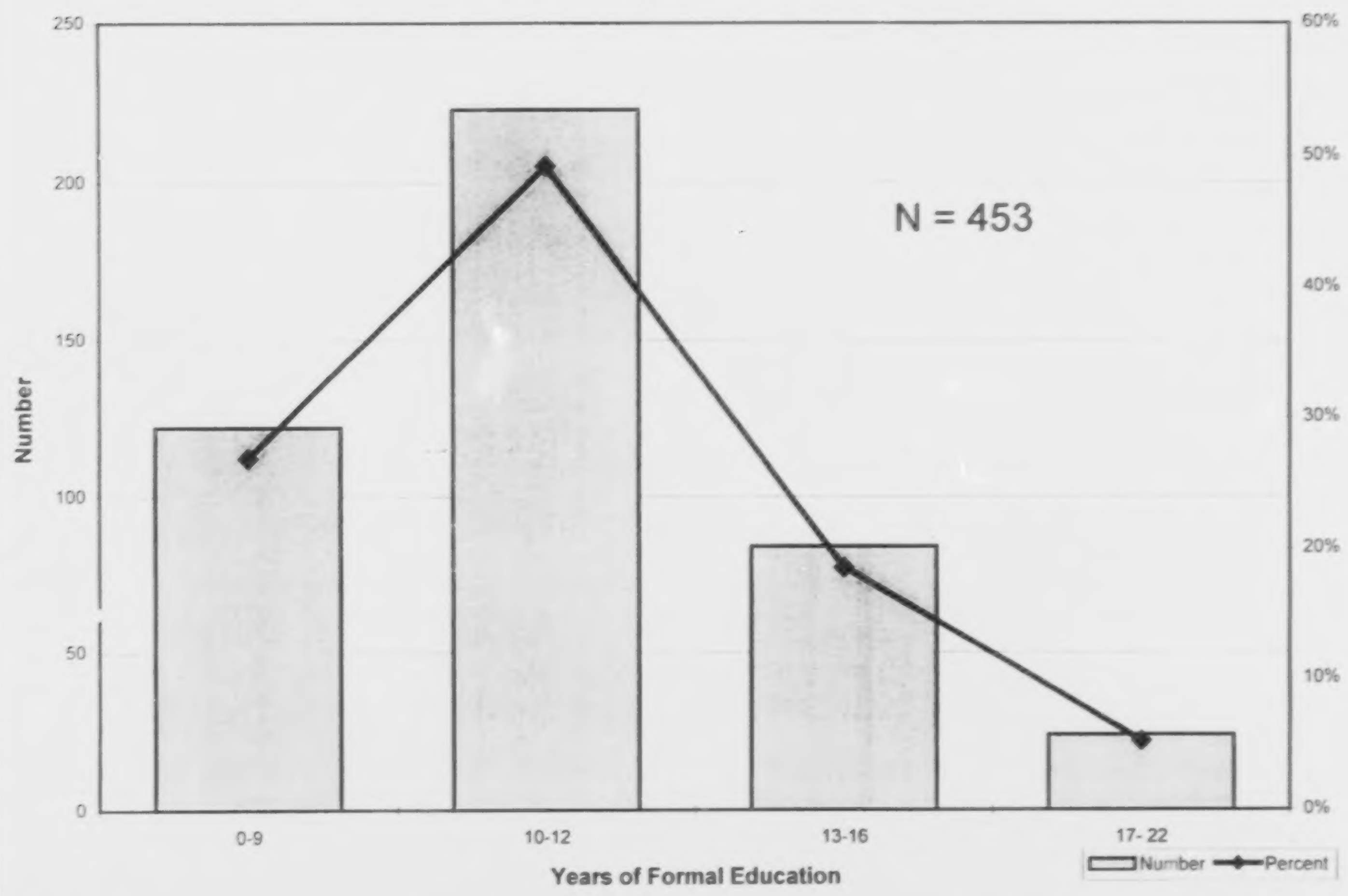
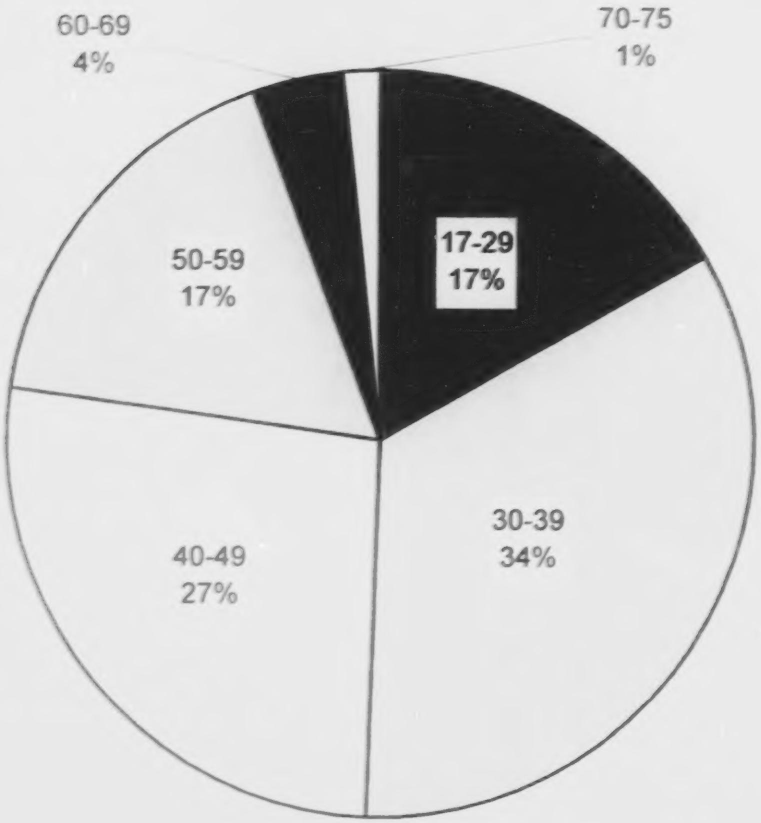


Figure 6
Pre-Tested Students by Age



N = 457

Figure 7
Pre-Test Distribution by Condition

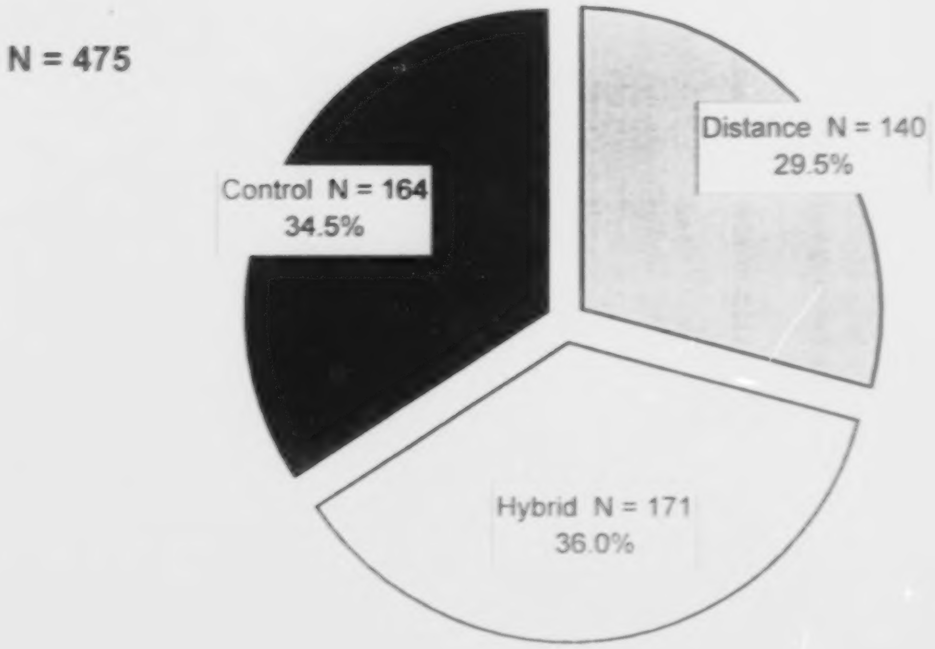


Figure 8
Retention: Urban, Suburban, Rural

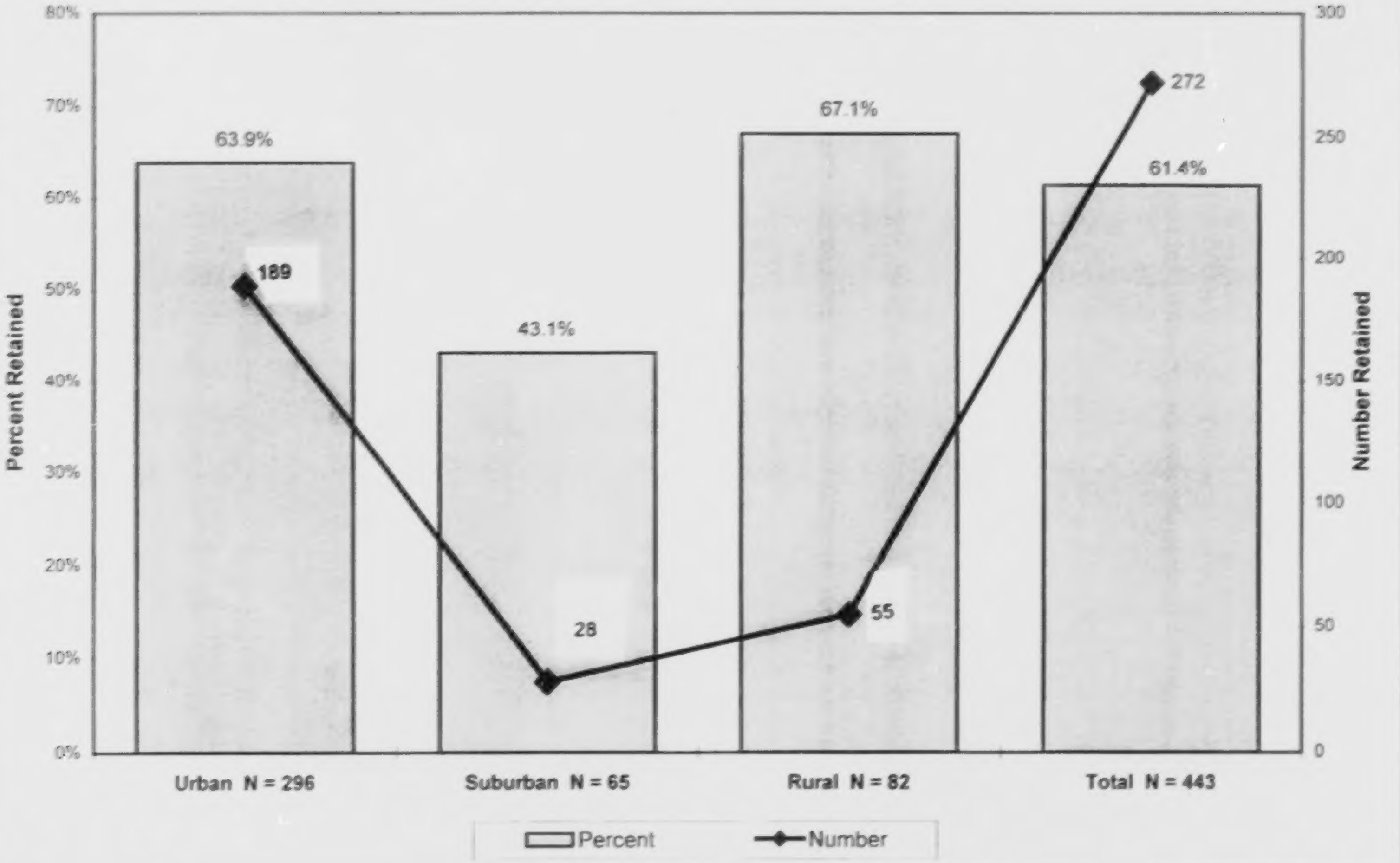


Figure 9

Distribution of Retained Students by Years of Education

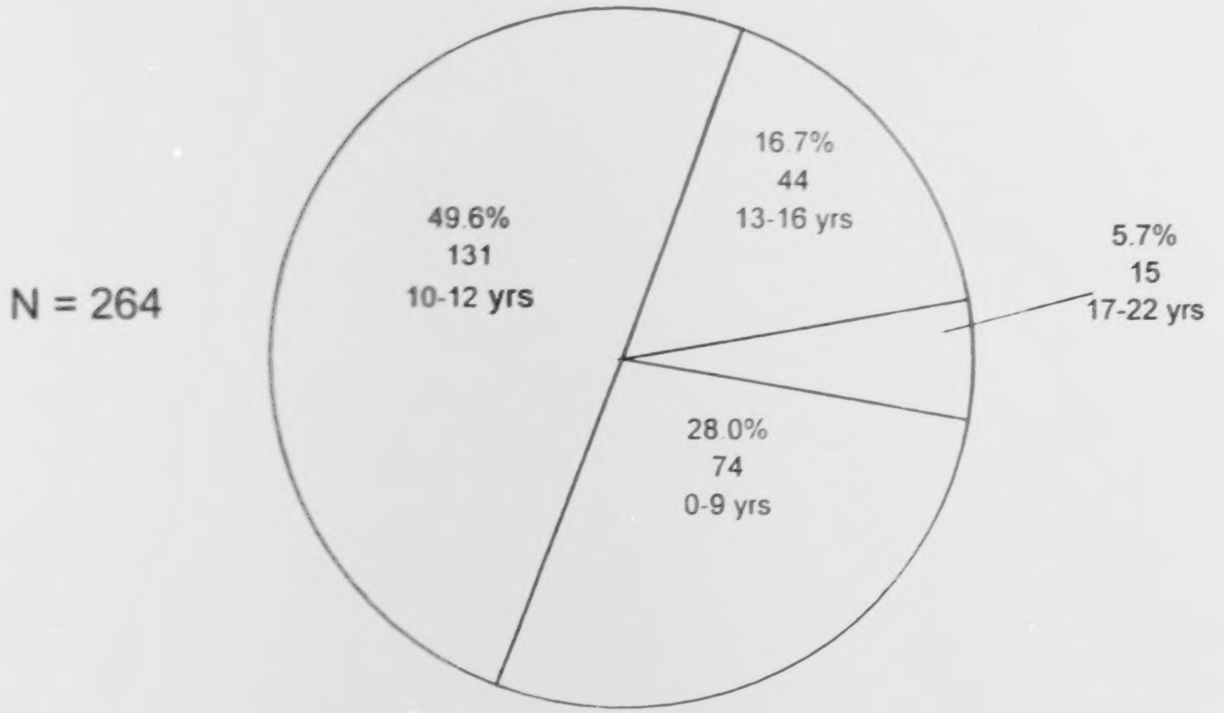
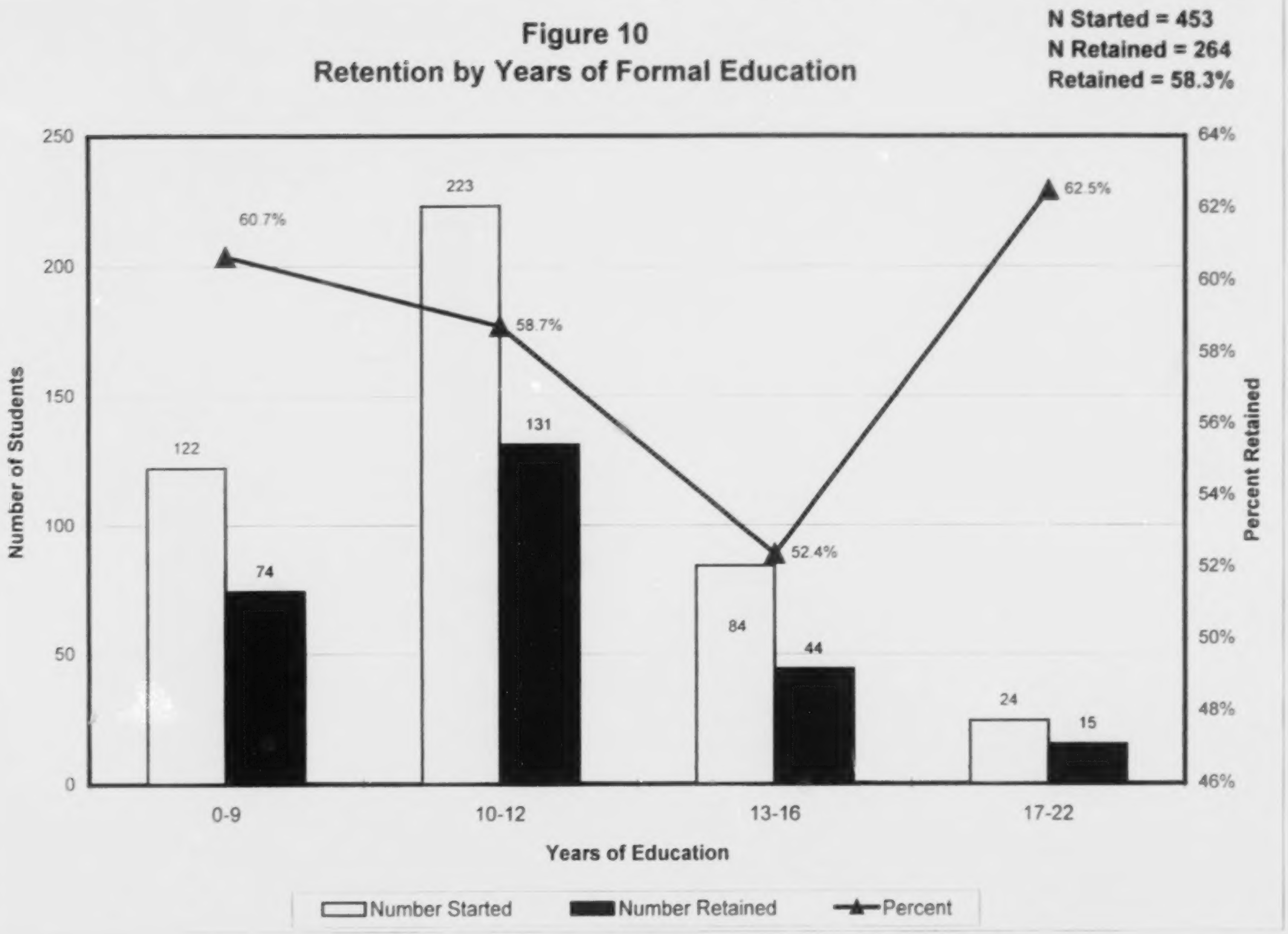


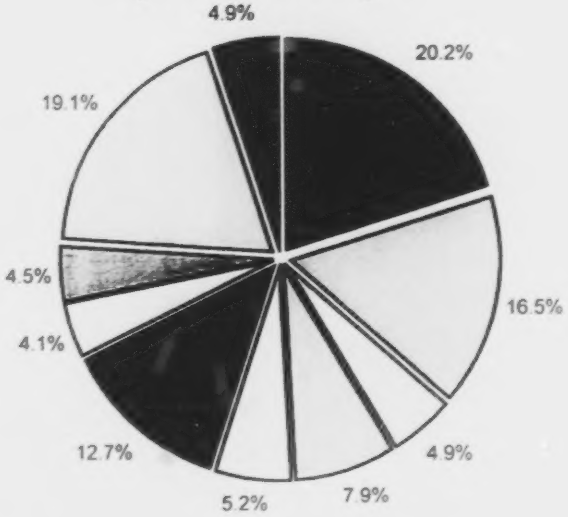
Figure 10
Retention by Years of Formal Education



Dominican Rep.	54	20.2%
Puerto Rico	44	16.5%
Central America	13	4.9%
South America	21	7.9%
Mexico	14	5.2%
China	34	12.7%
Other Asian	11	4.1%
Haiti	12	4.5%
Eastern Europe	51	19.1%
Other	13	4.9%
Total	267	100%

Figure 11

Distribution of Retained Students by National Origin



Native Language	Number	Percent
Spanish	149	54.6%
Chinese	37	13.6%
Asian	9	3.3%
Russian	40	14.7%
Haitian Creole	13	4.8%
Slavic	11	4.0%
Other	14	5.1%
Total	273	

Figure 12
Distribution by Language of Retained Students

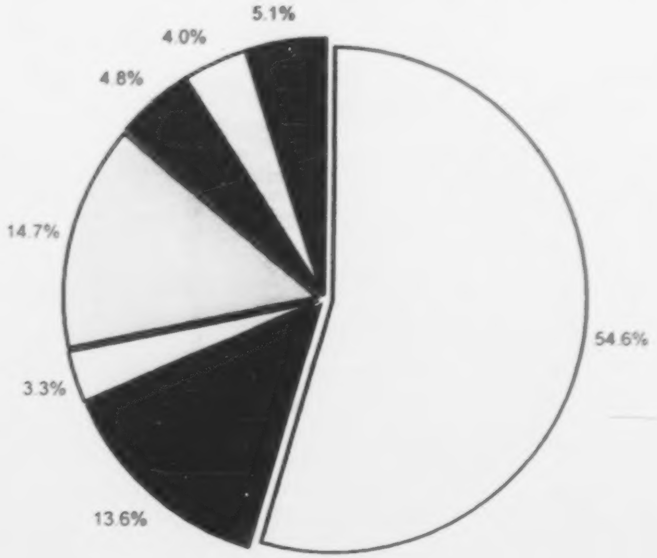


Figure 13
Post-Test Distribution by Condition

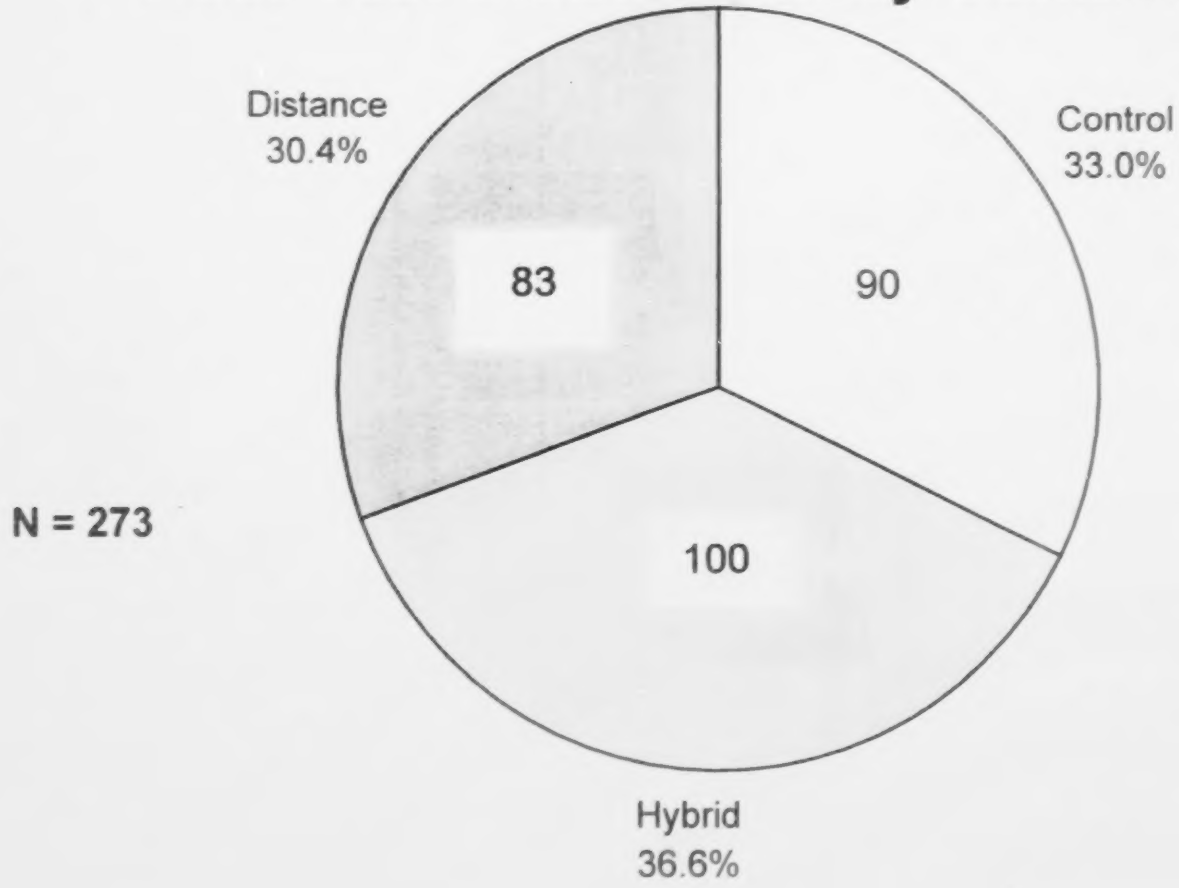


Figure 14
Student Retention Rates by Age

N = 263

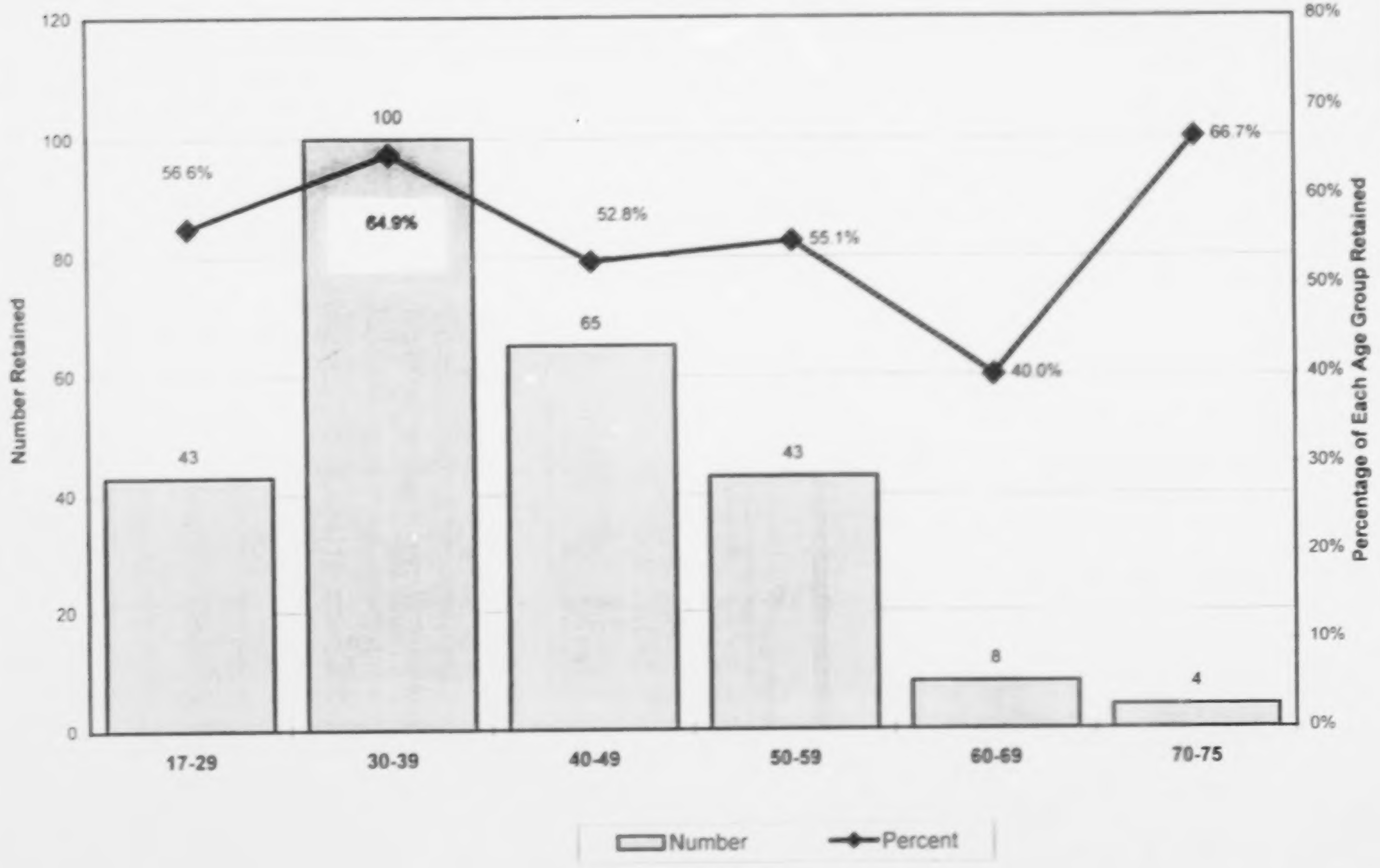


Figure 15
Distribution of Retained Students by Age

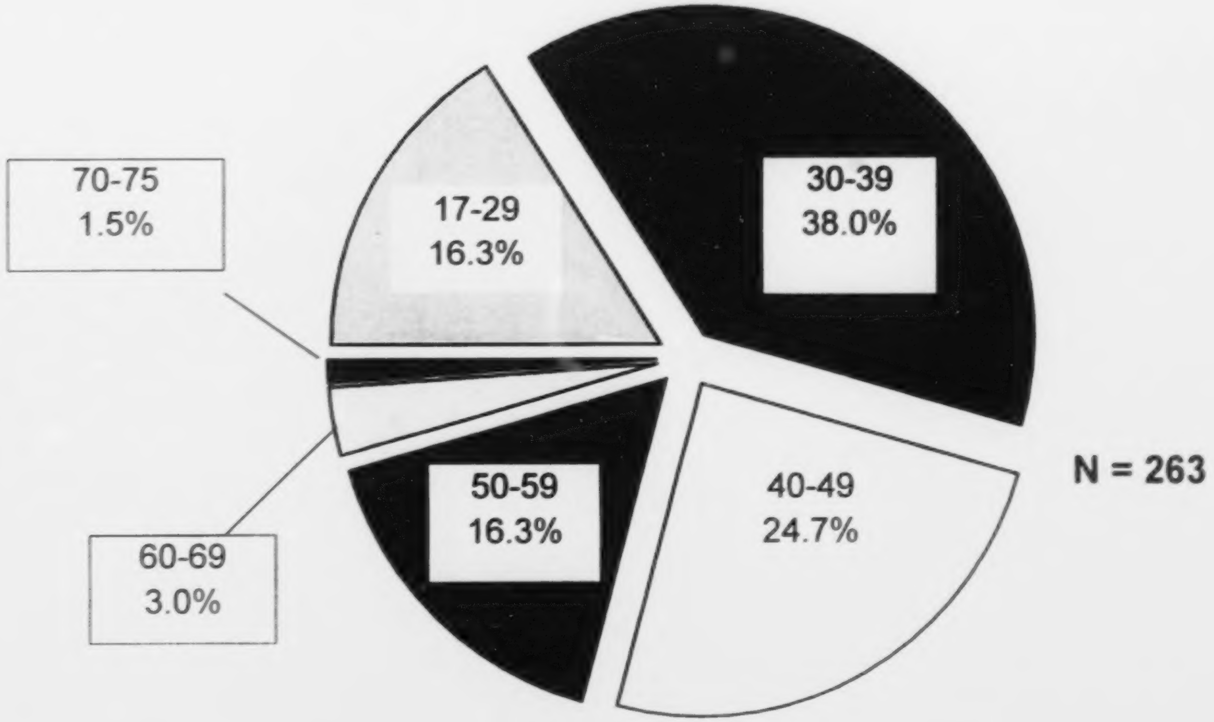
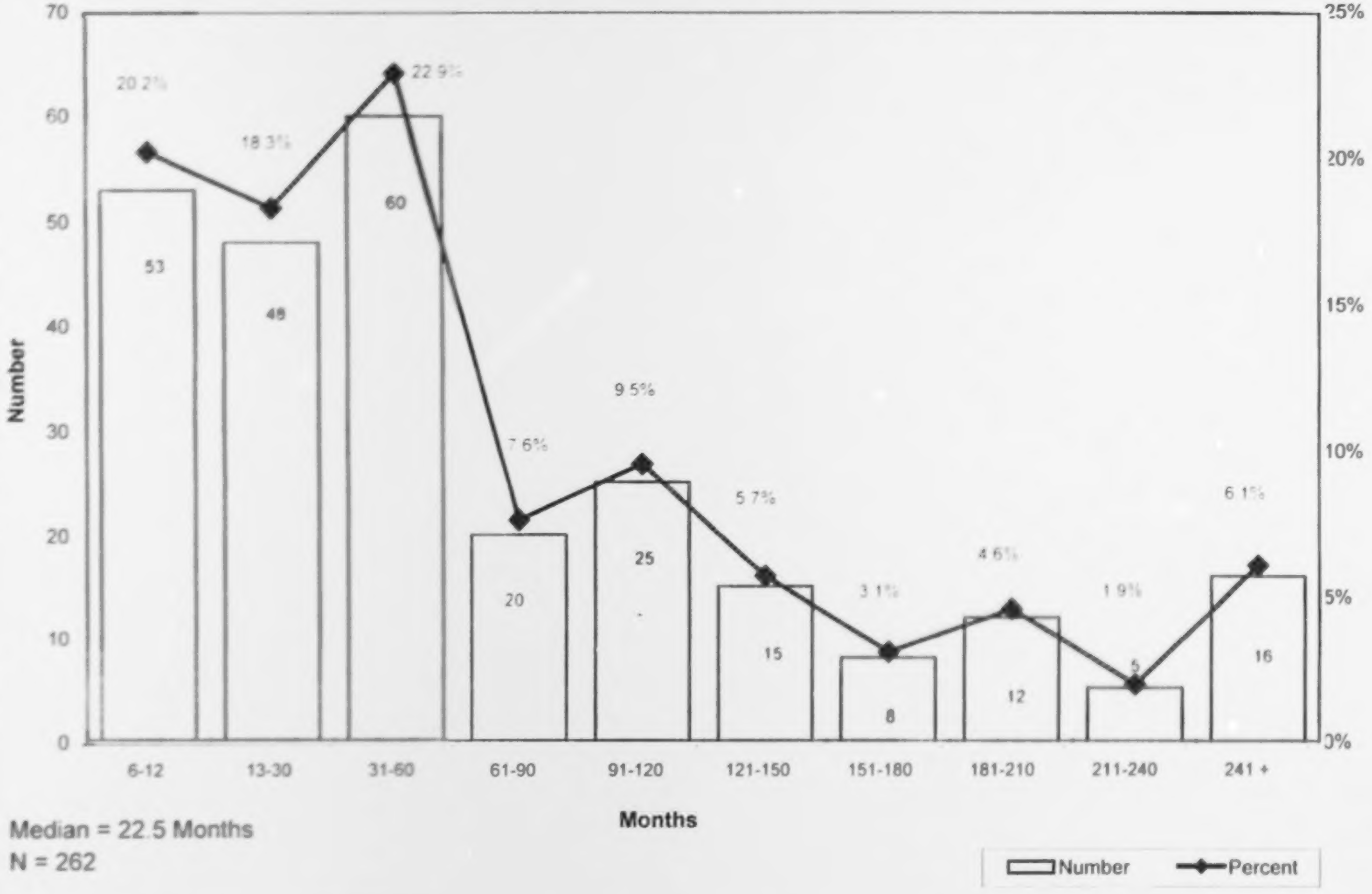


Figure 16
Residence in the USA in Months



Median = 22.5 Months
N = 262

Figure 17
Months at Current Residence

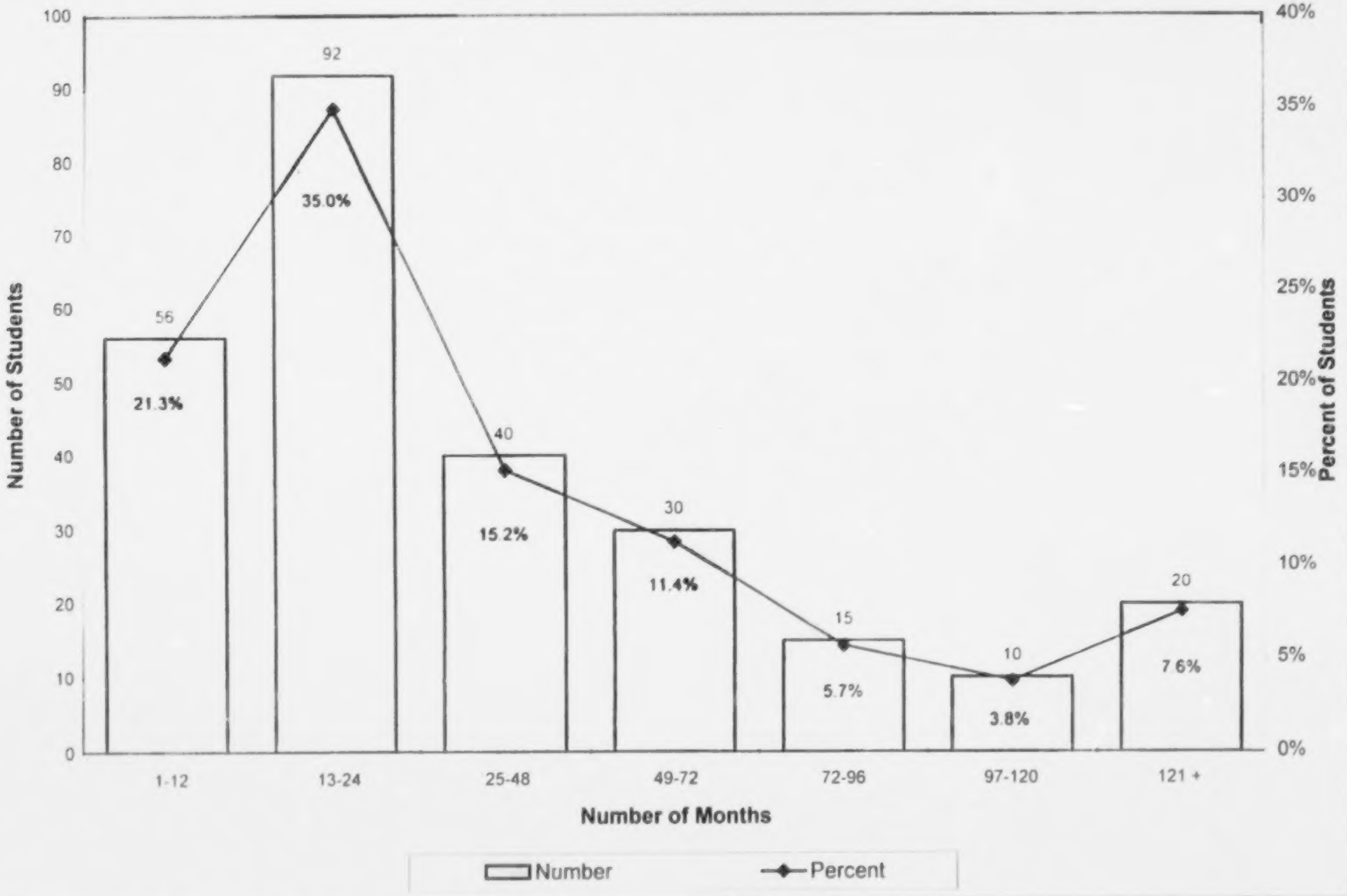
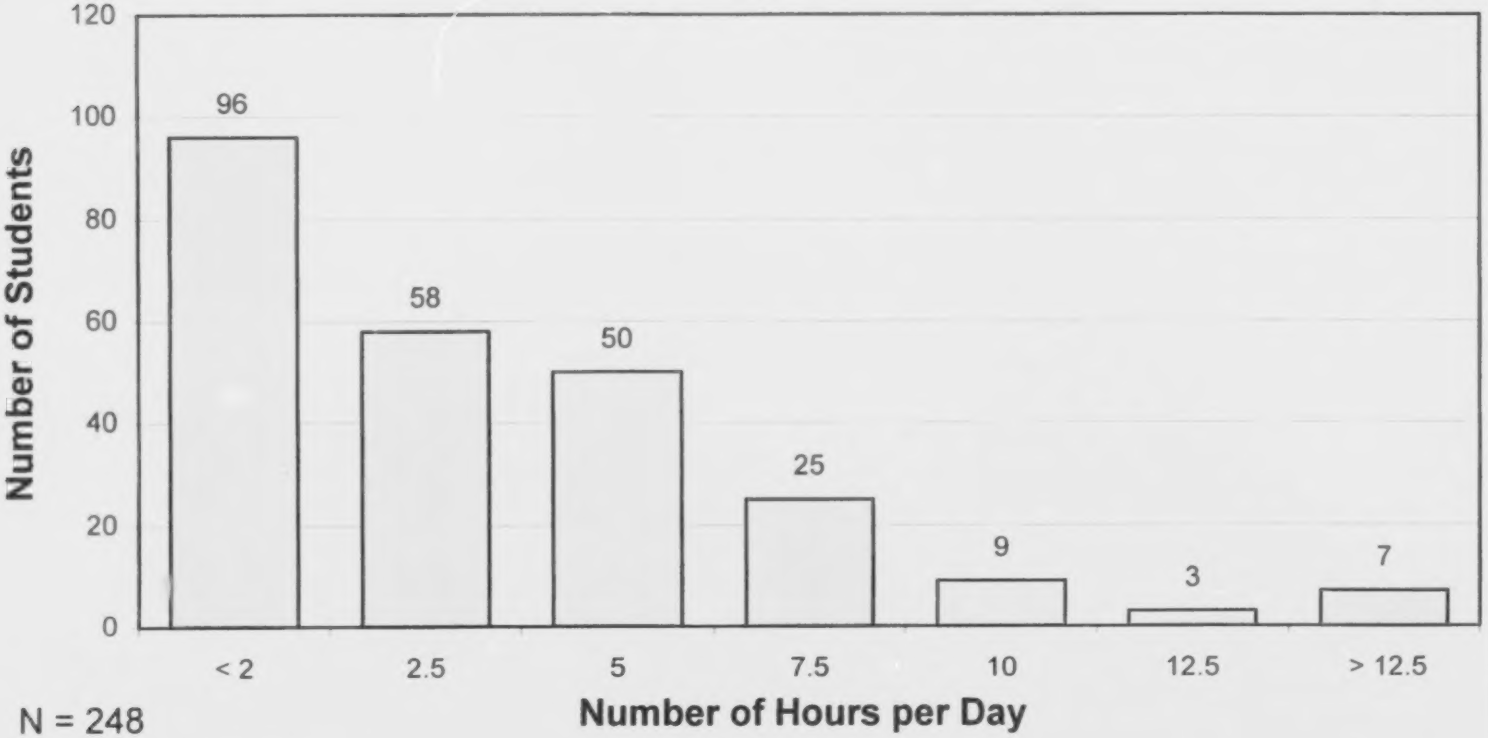
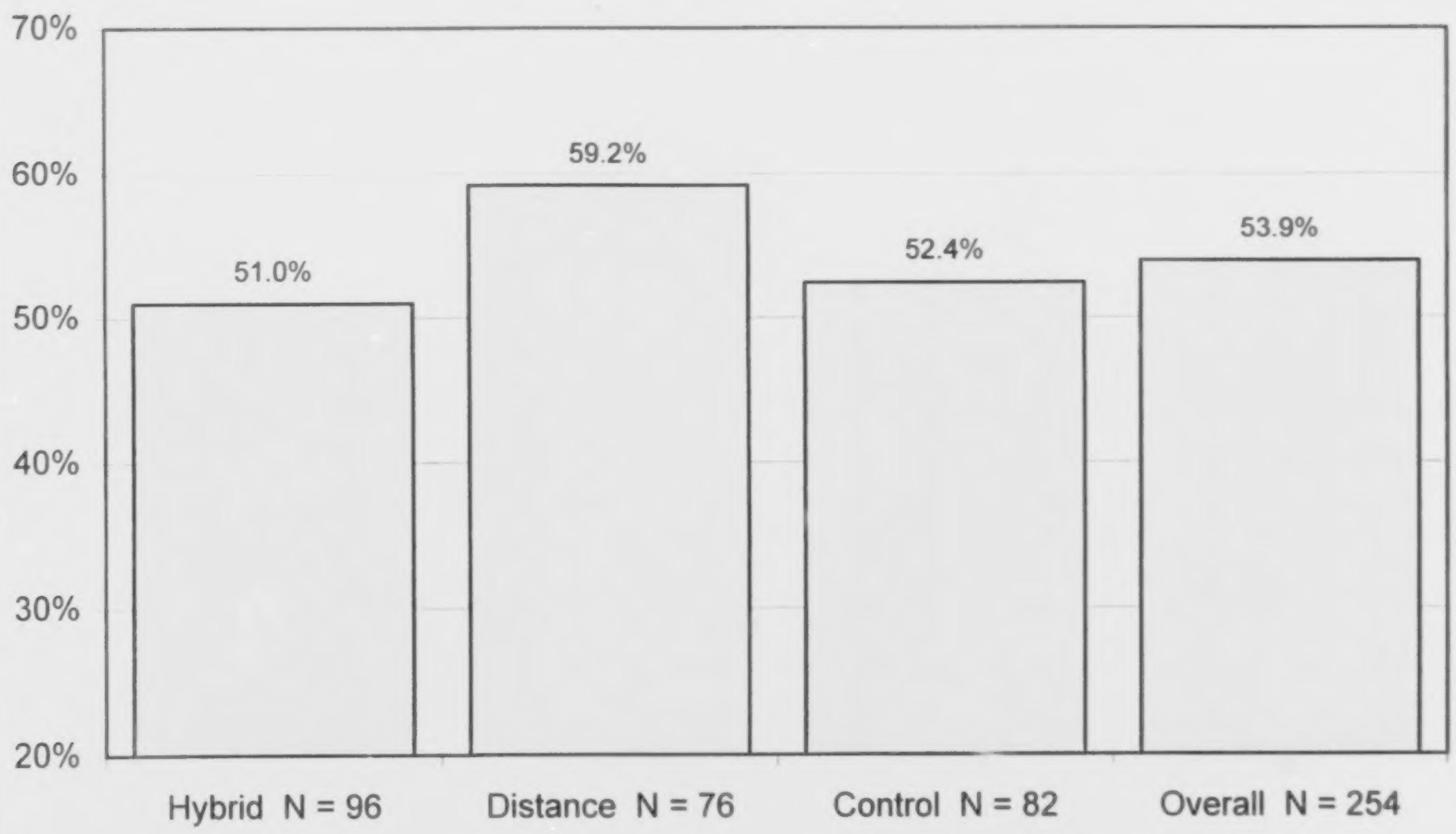


Figure 18
English Spoken Daily by Students



N = 248
Median = 2.24 hours

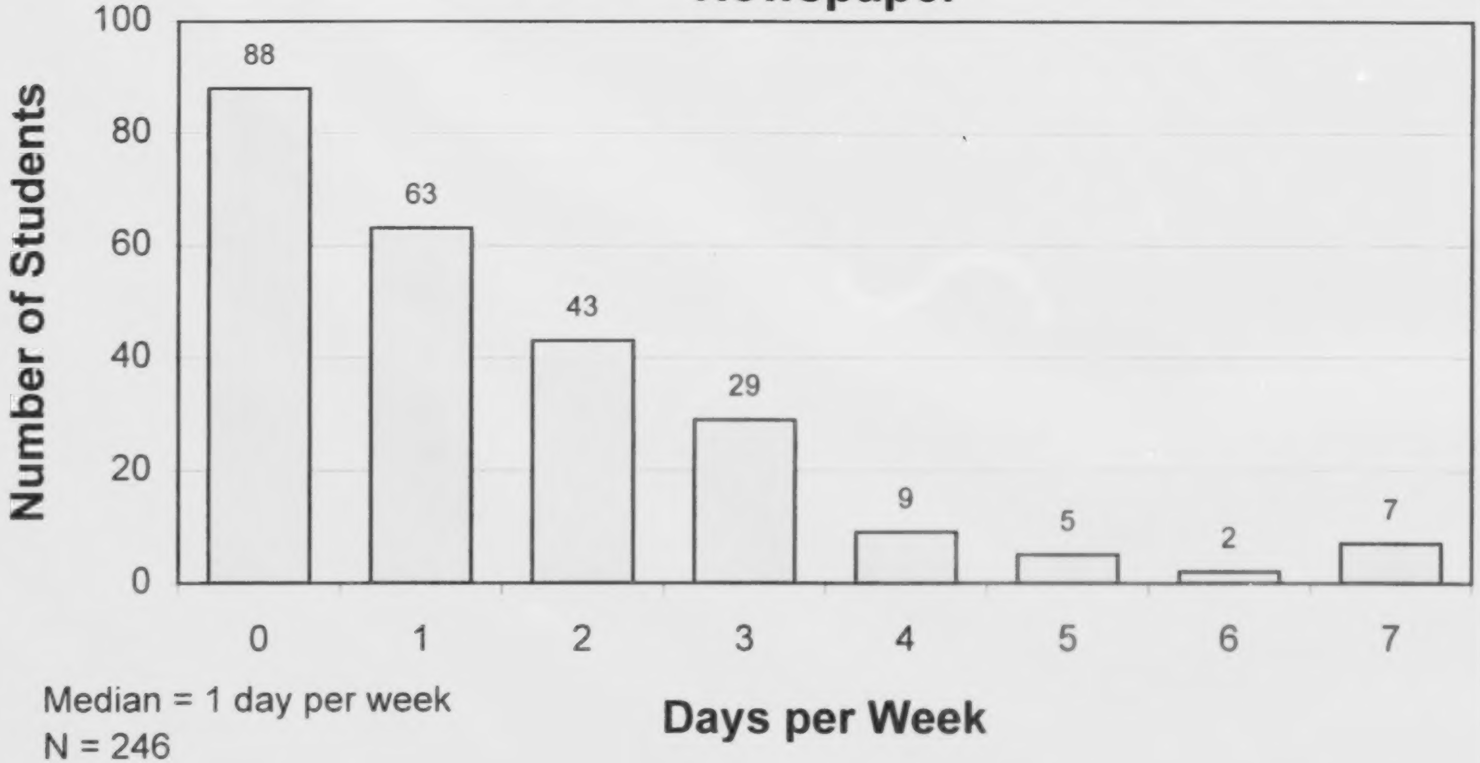
Figure 19
Percent of Pre-Test Students Not Needing to Speak English



124

125

Figure 20
Days per Week Read English Language Newspaper



Median = 1 day per week
N = 246

Figure 21
Retained Learners Employment Pattern

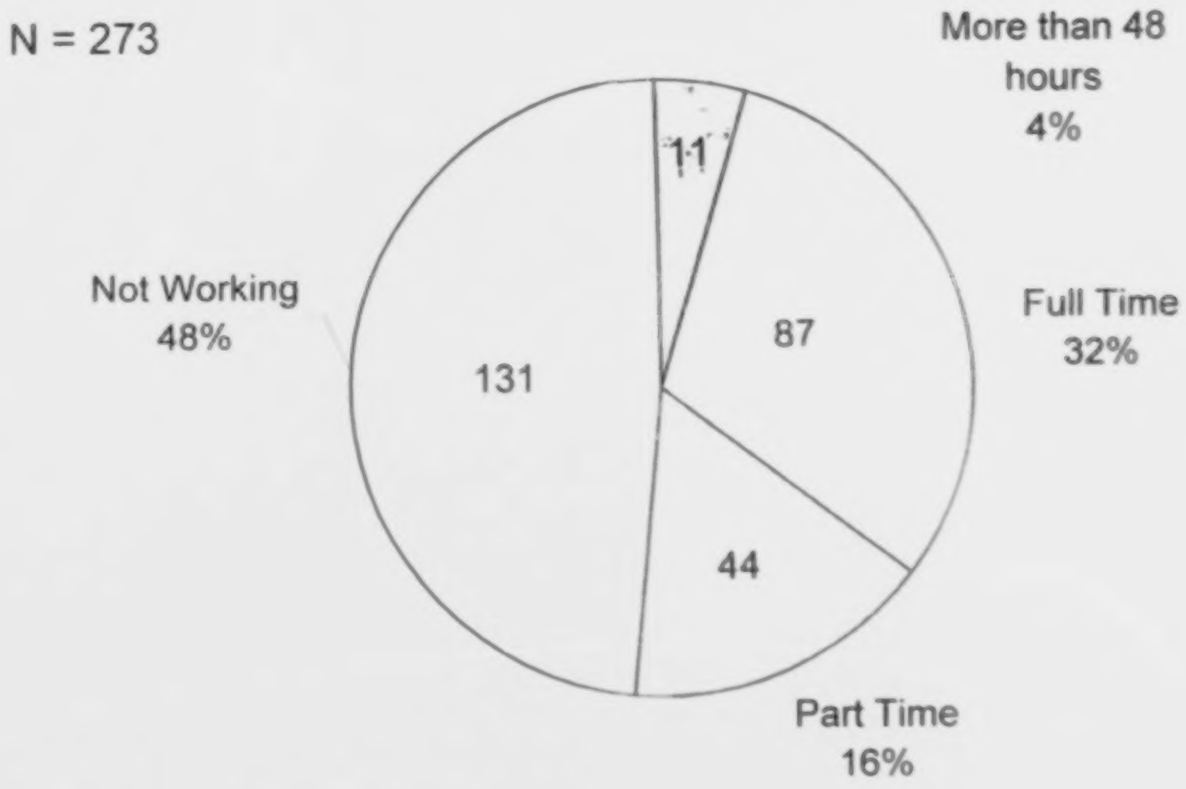


Figure 22
Years at Current Job

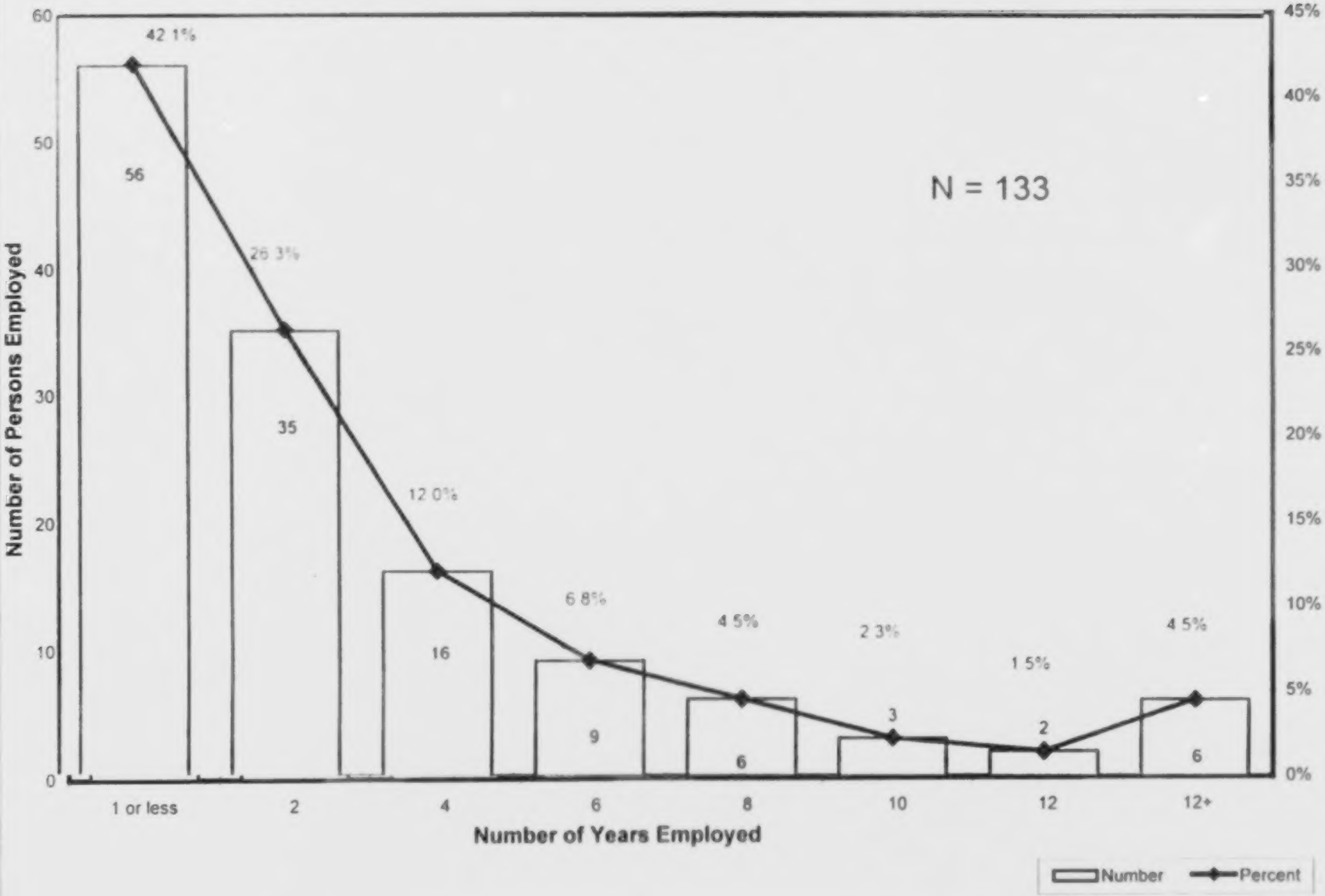


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Figure 23
Reasons Cited for Studying English

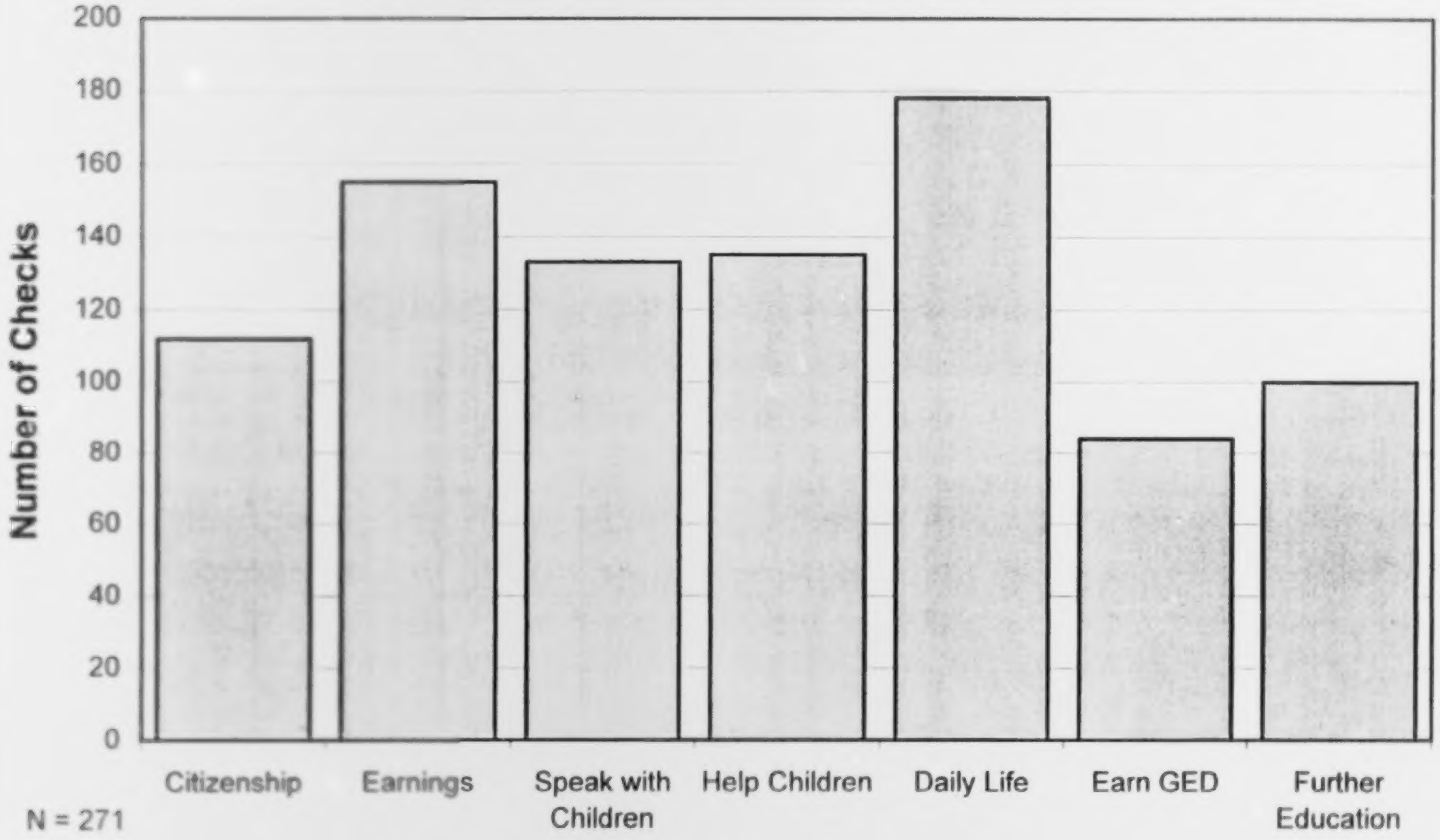


Figure 24
Post-Test Adjusted Means BEST

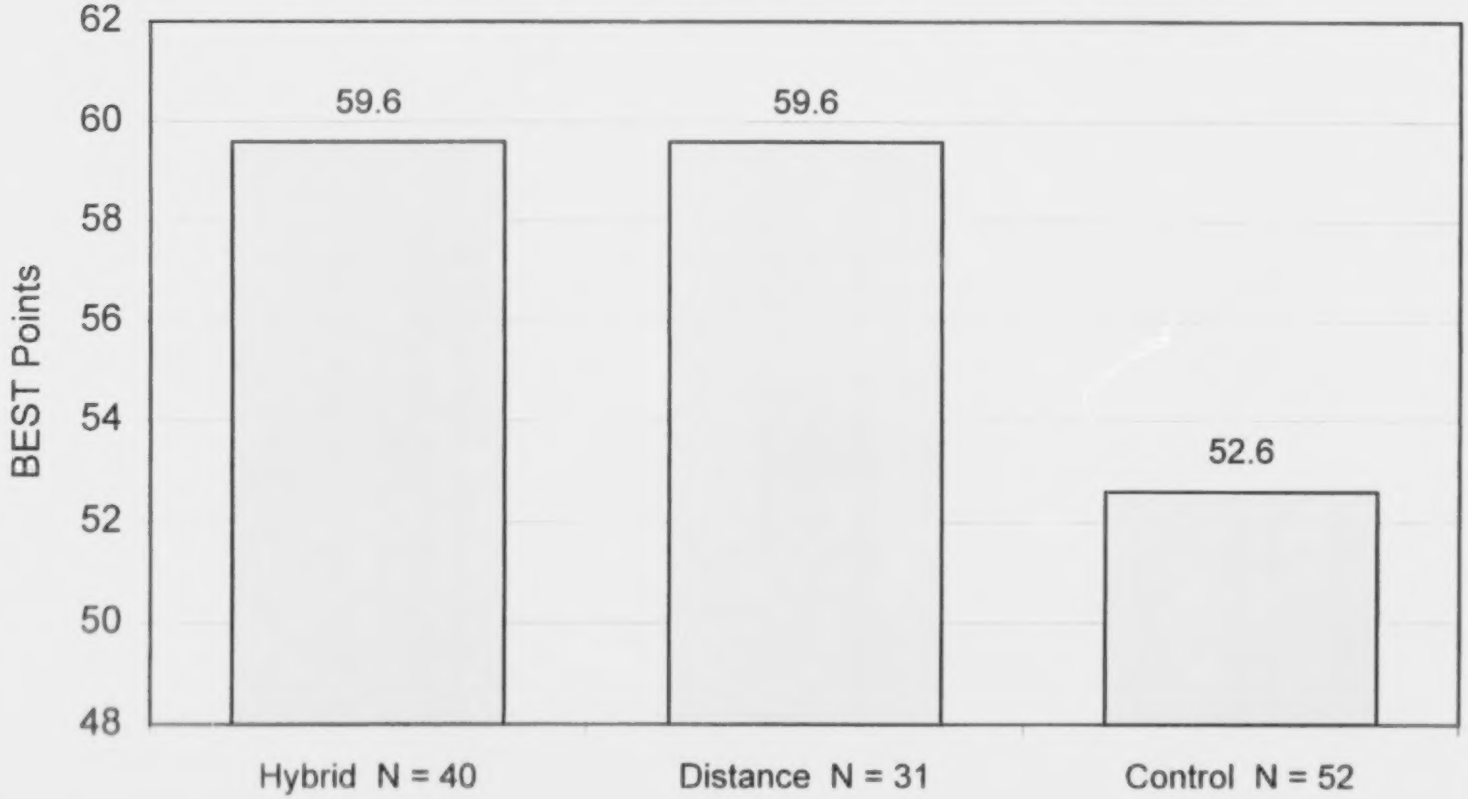


Figure 25
Post-Test Adjusted Means CASAS Reading

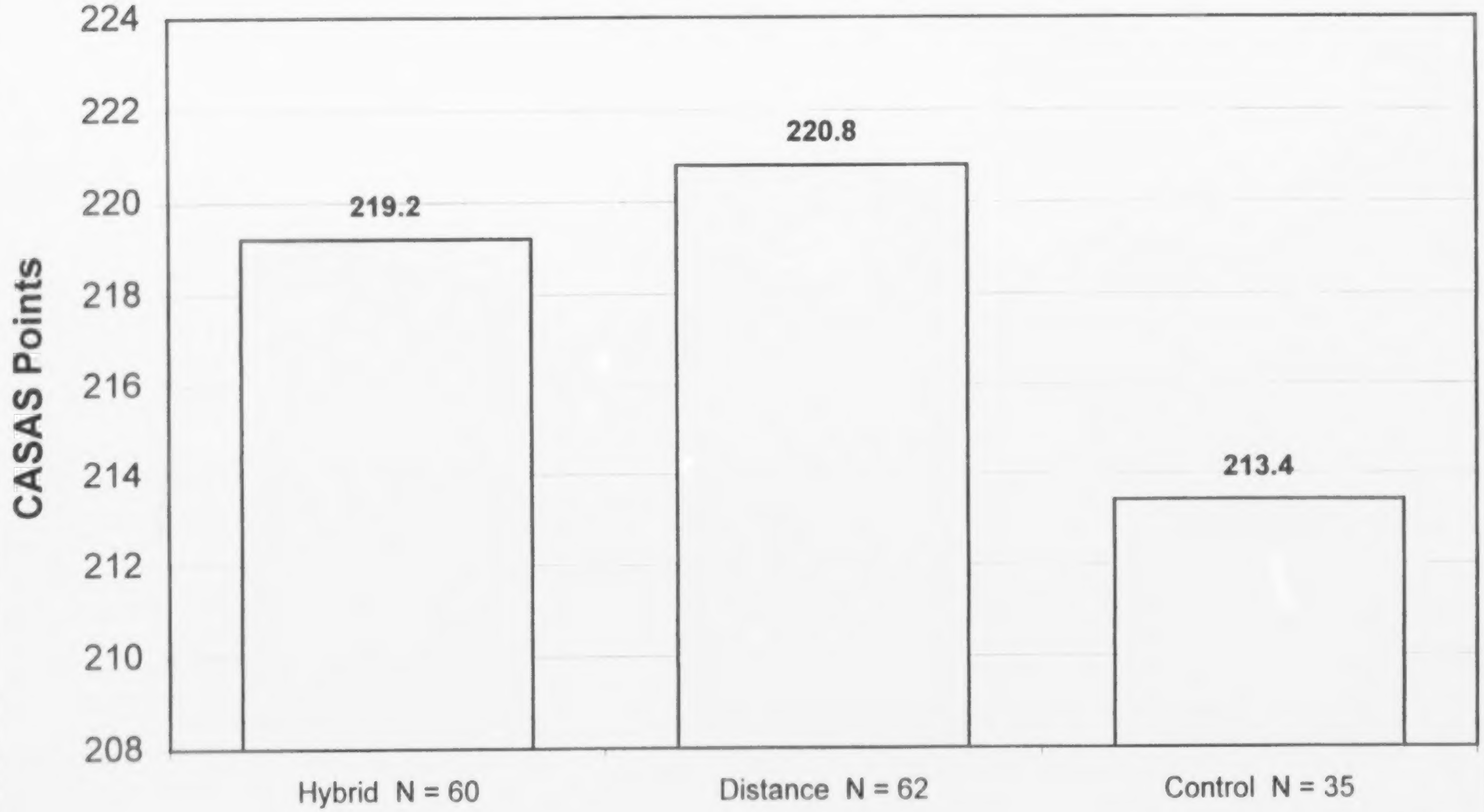
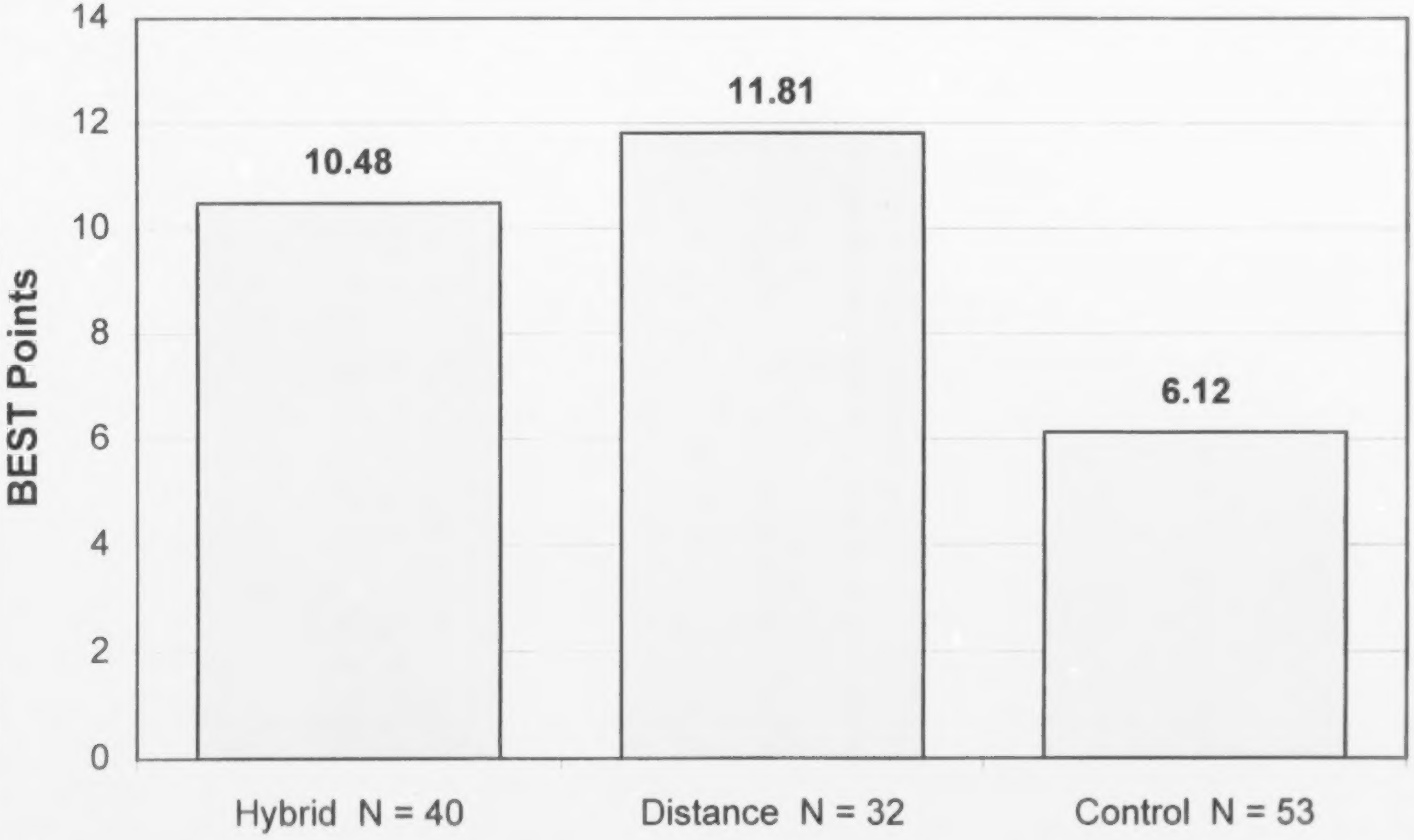


Figure 26
BEST Reading Mean Point Gains



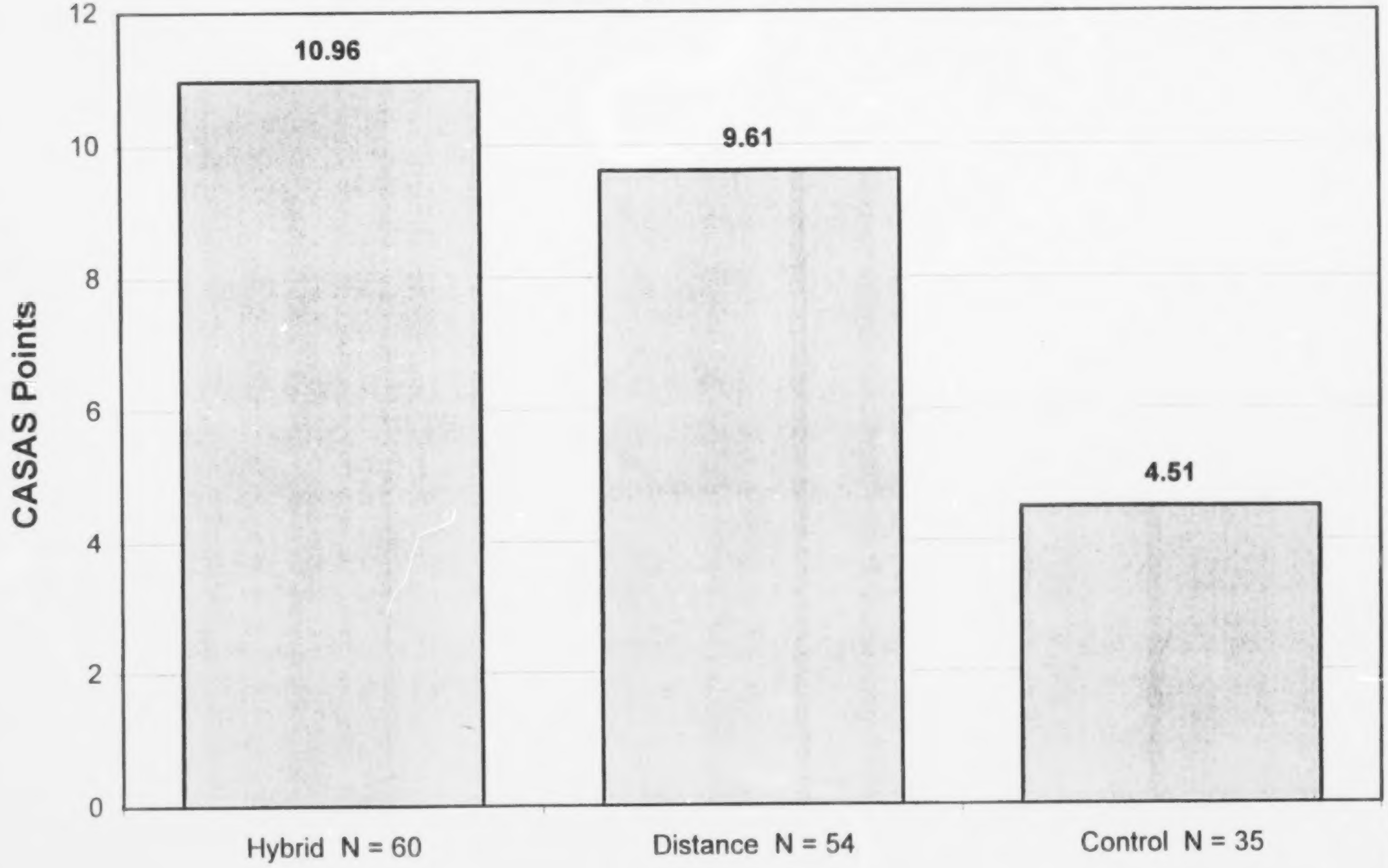


Figure 27
CASAS Reading Mean Point Gains

Figure 28
Post-Test Adjusted Means
CASAS and BEST SPL's

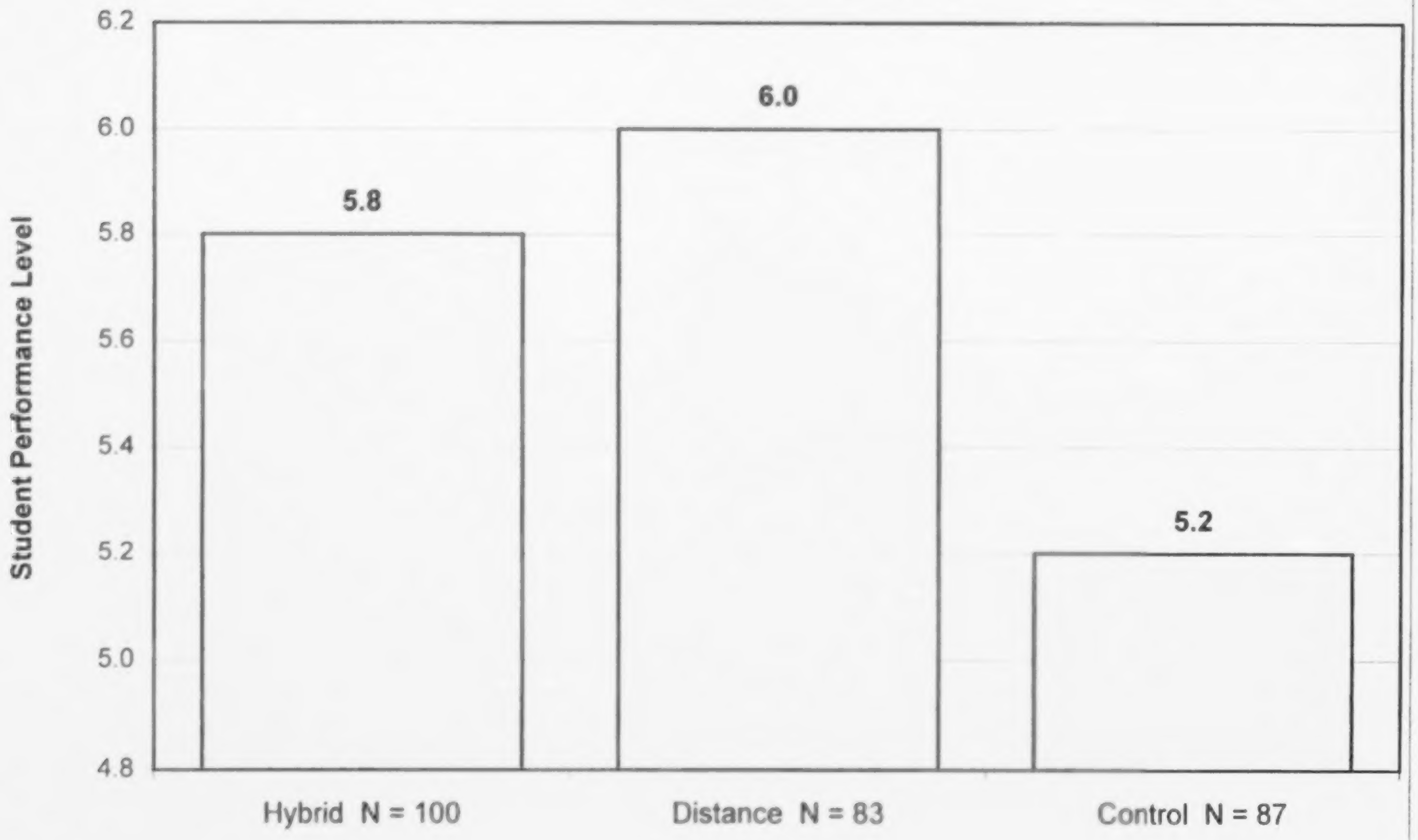


Figure 29
Student Performance Level (SPL) Gains

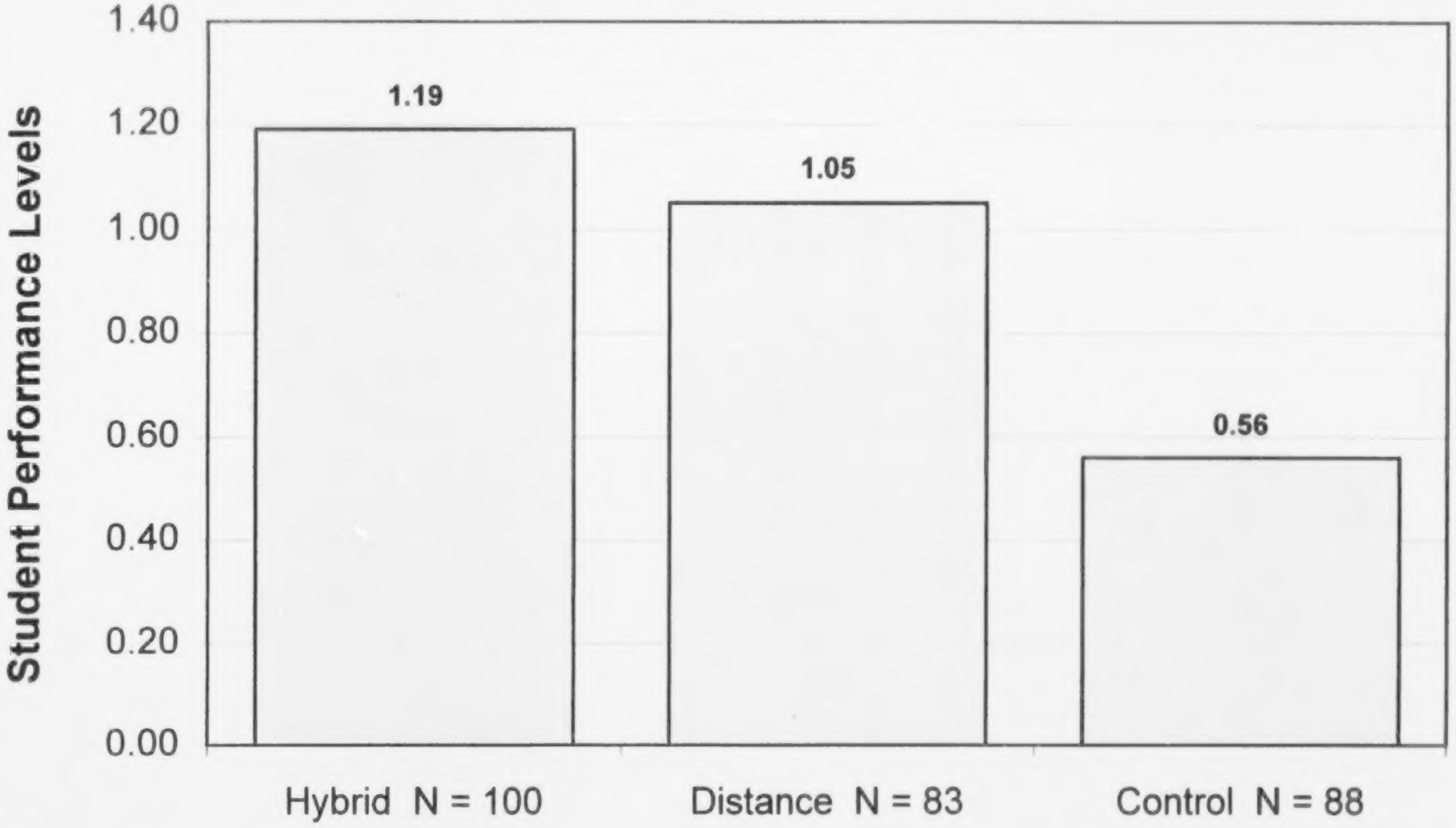


Figure 30
CASAS Listening Unadjusted Mean Point Gains

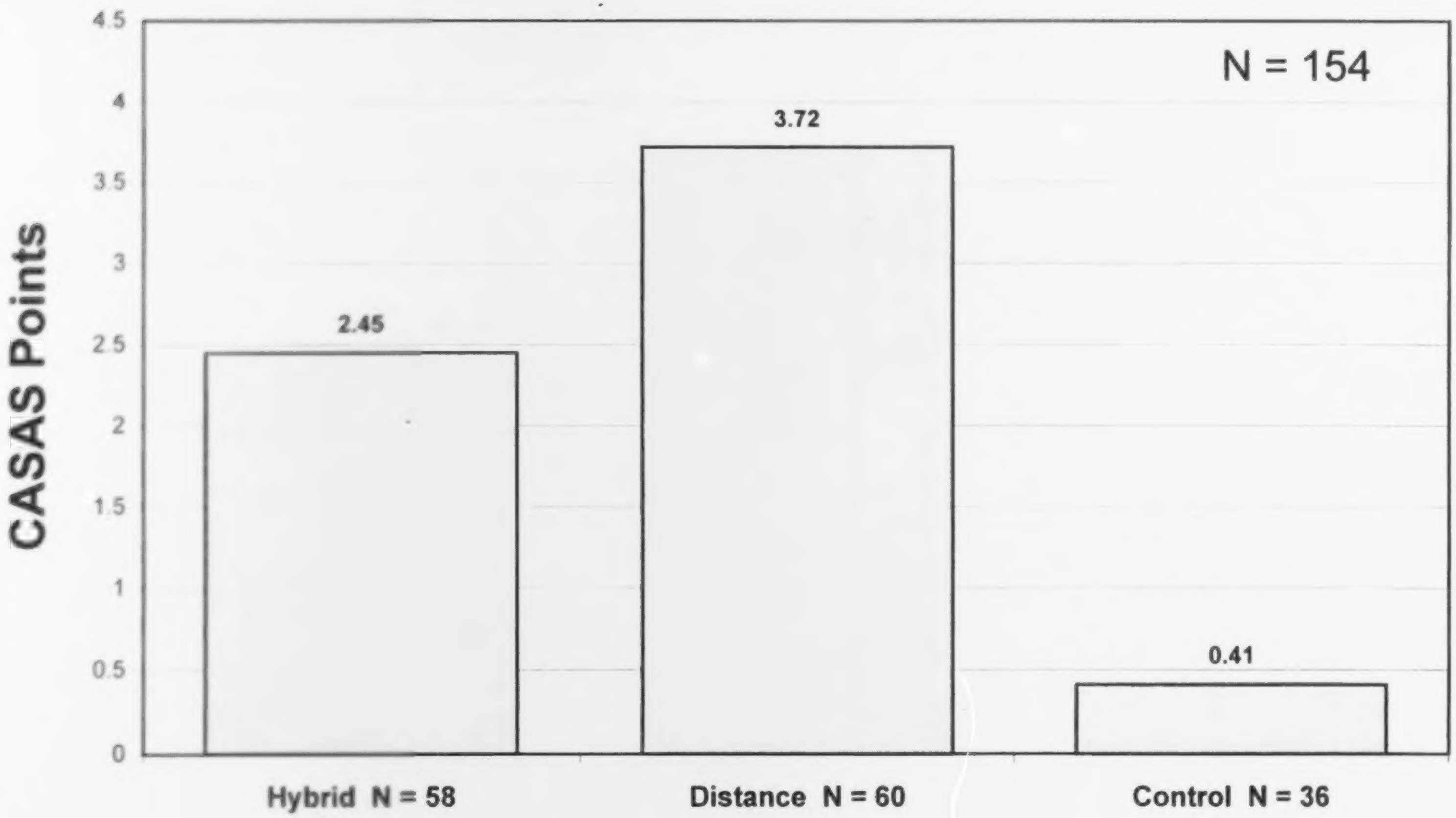


Figure 31
CASAS Reading Test
Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration

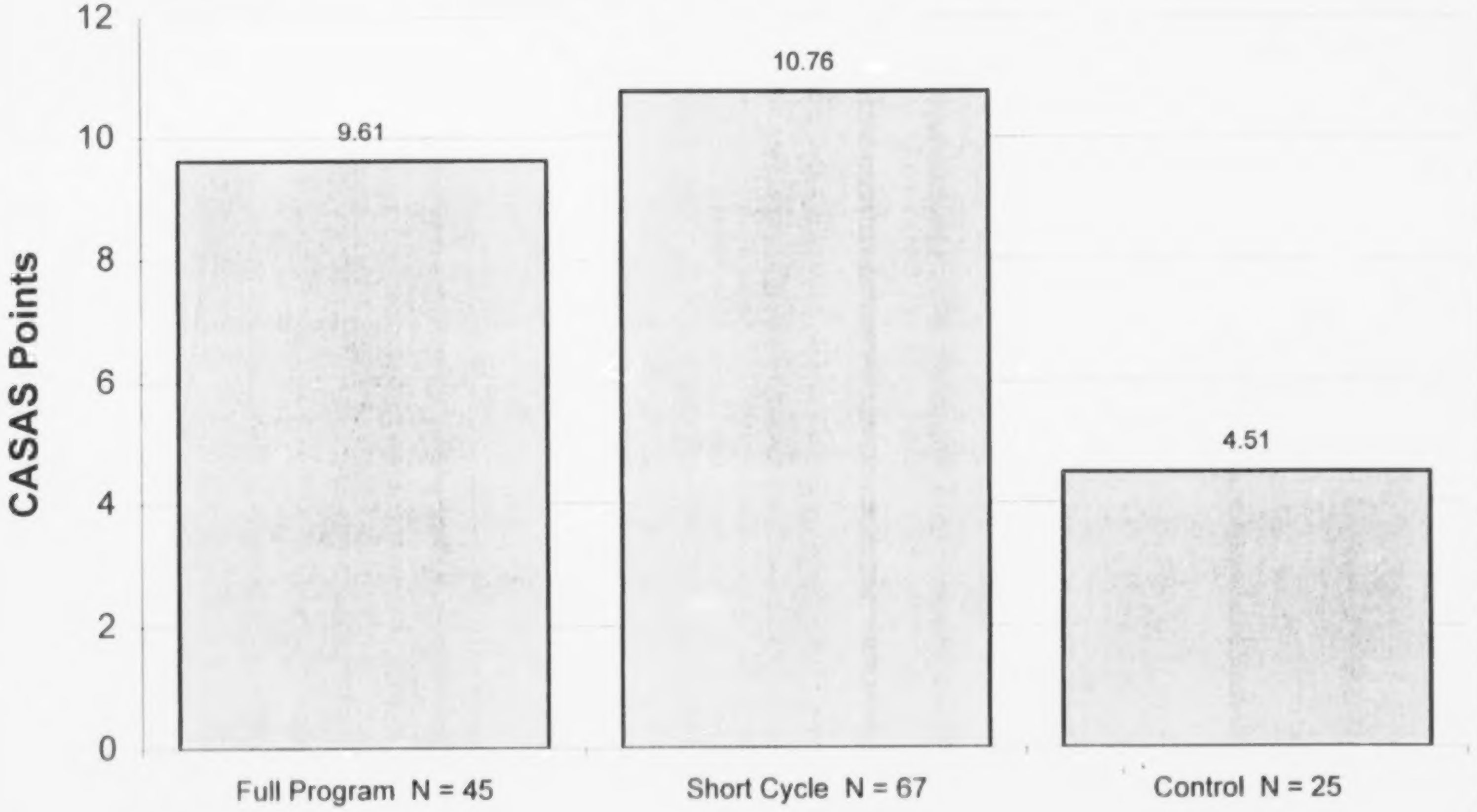


Figure 32
CASAS Listening Test
Unadjusted Mean Gains by Duration

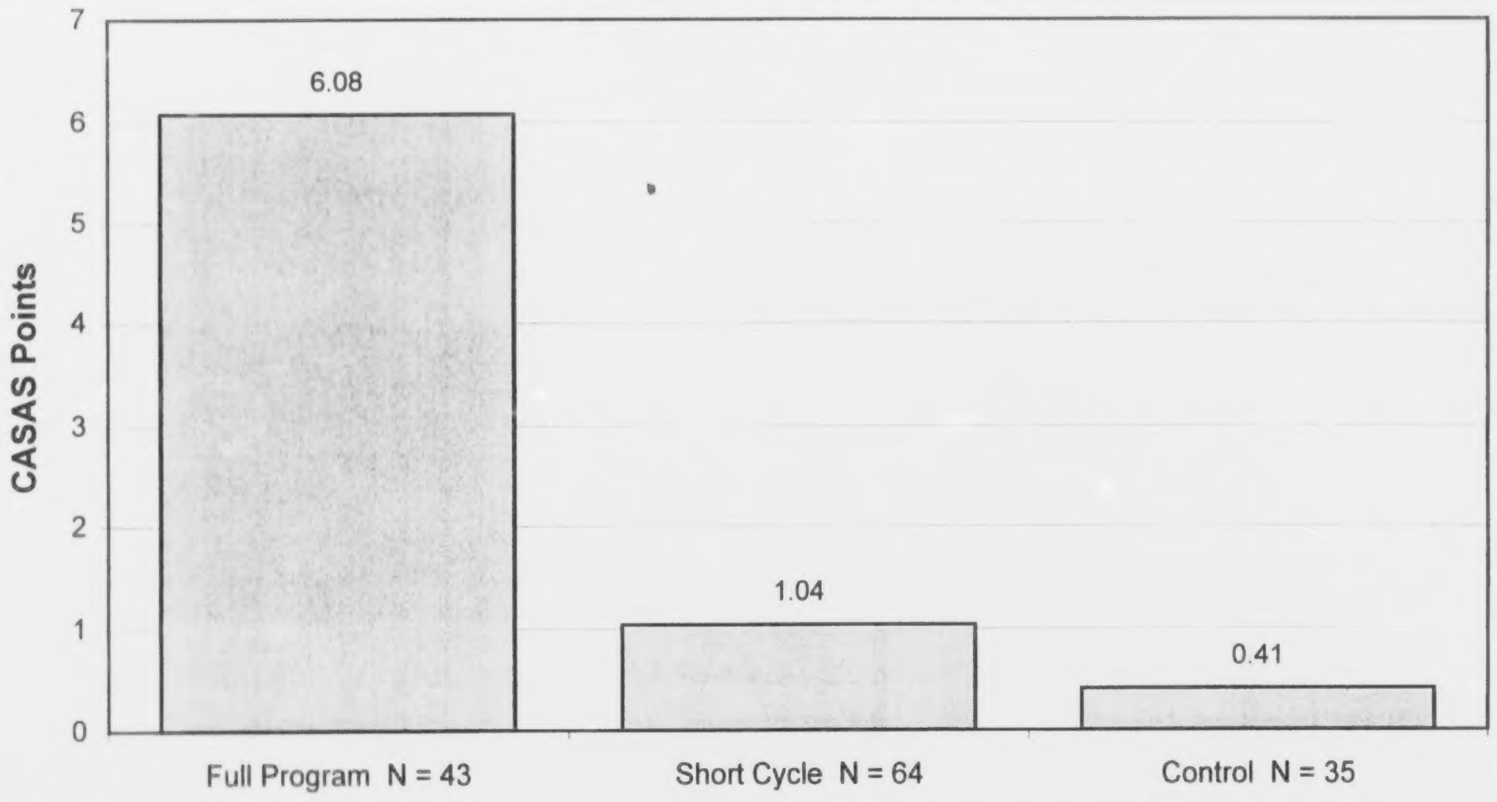


Figure 33
Unadjusted Mean Gains in CASAS Reading Points
by Initial Proficiency Level

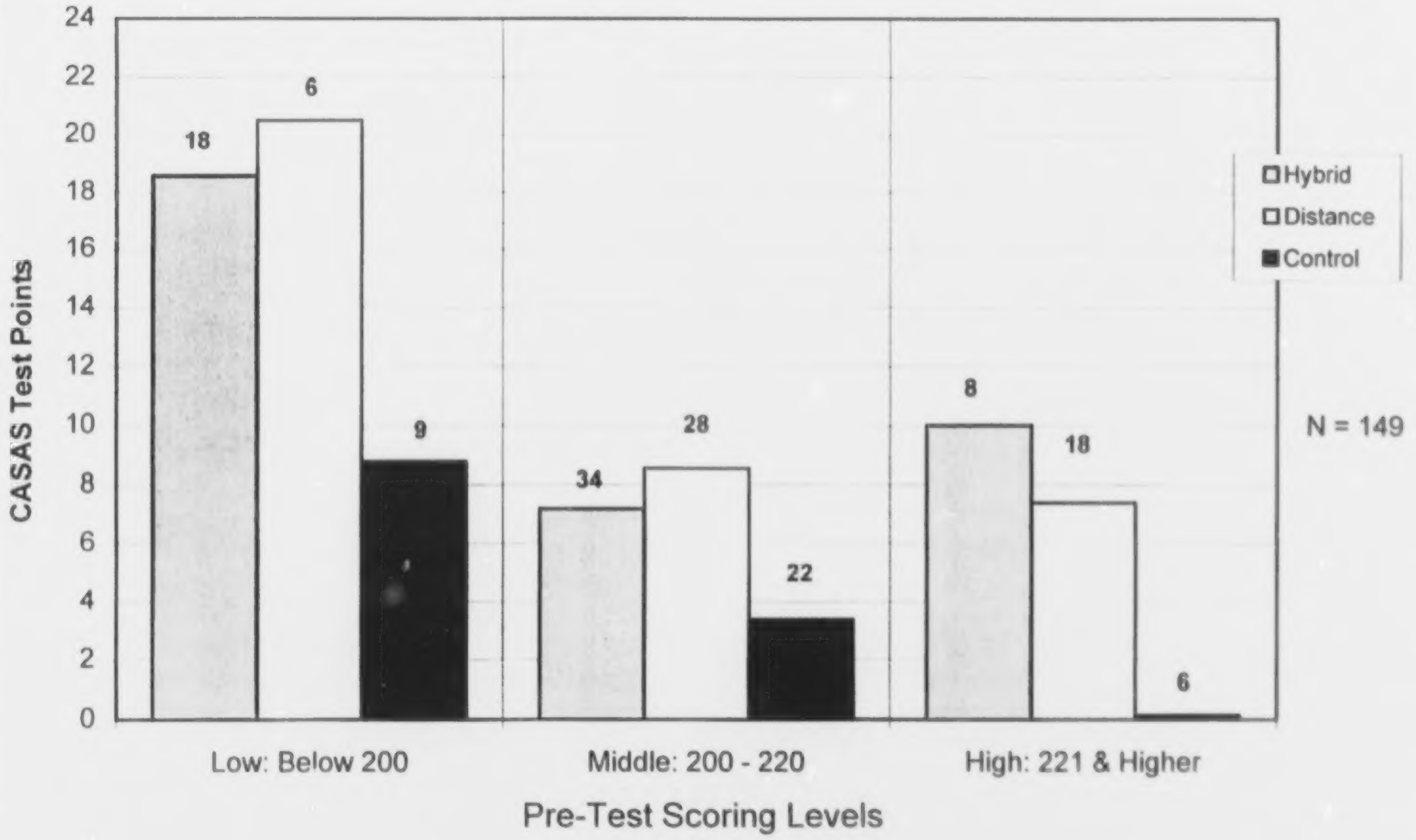


Figure 34
Mean Ratings by Teachers of Students' Understanding of Videos

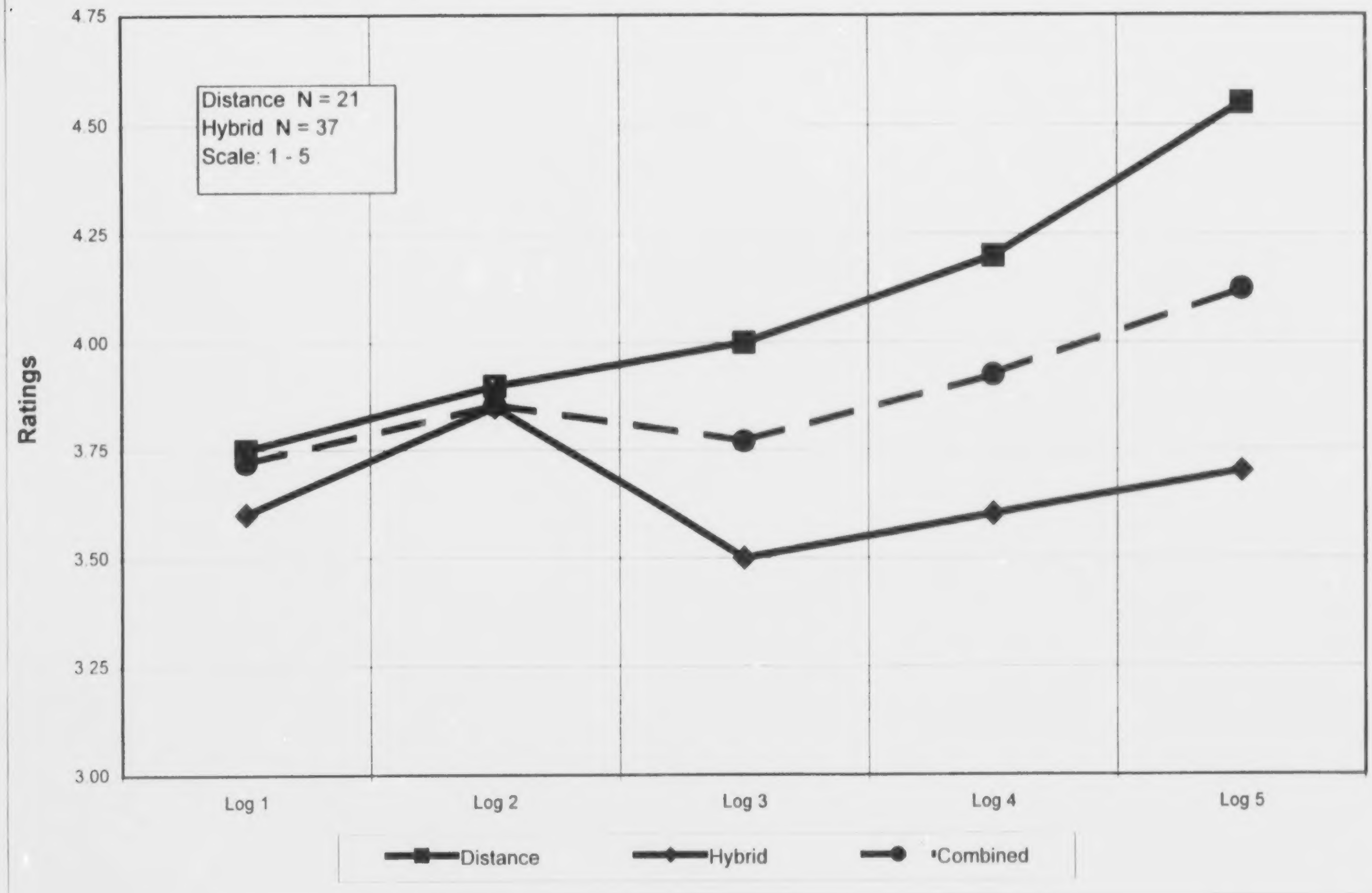


Figure 35
Mean Ratings by Teachers of Students' Verbal Expression

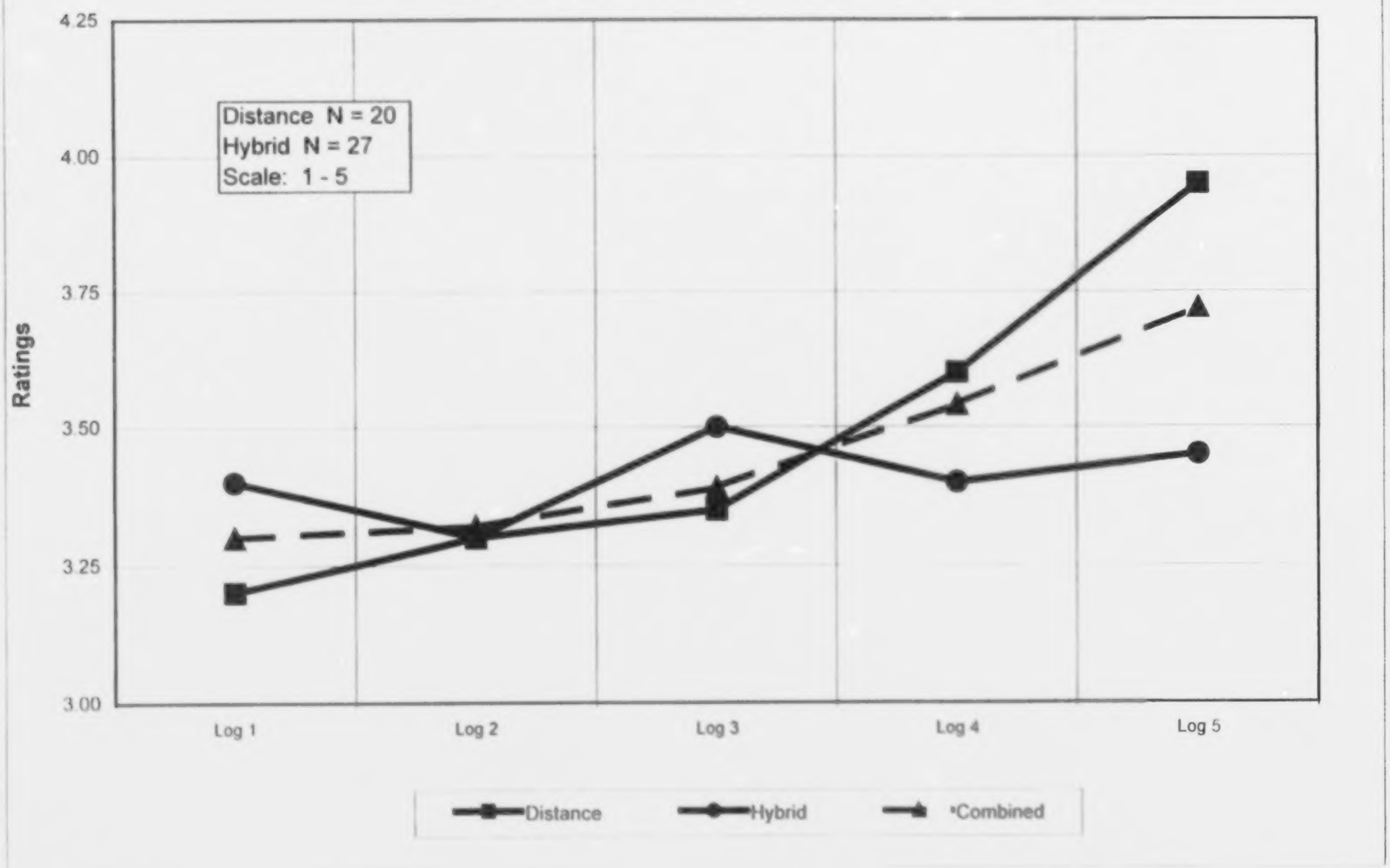


Figure 36
Coefficient of Correlation between Teachers' Ratings and Pre and Post Test Scores

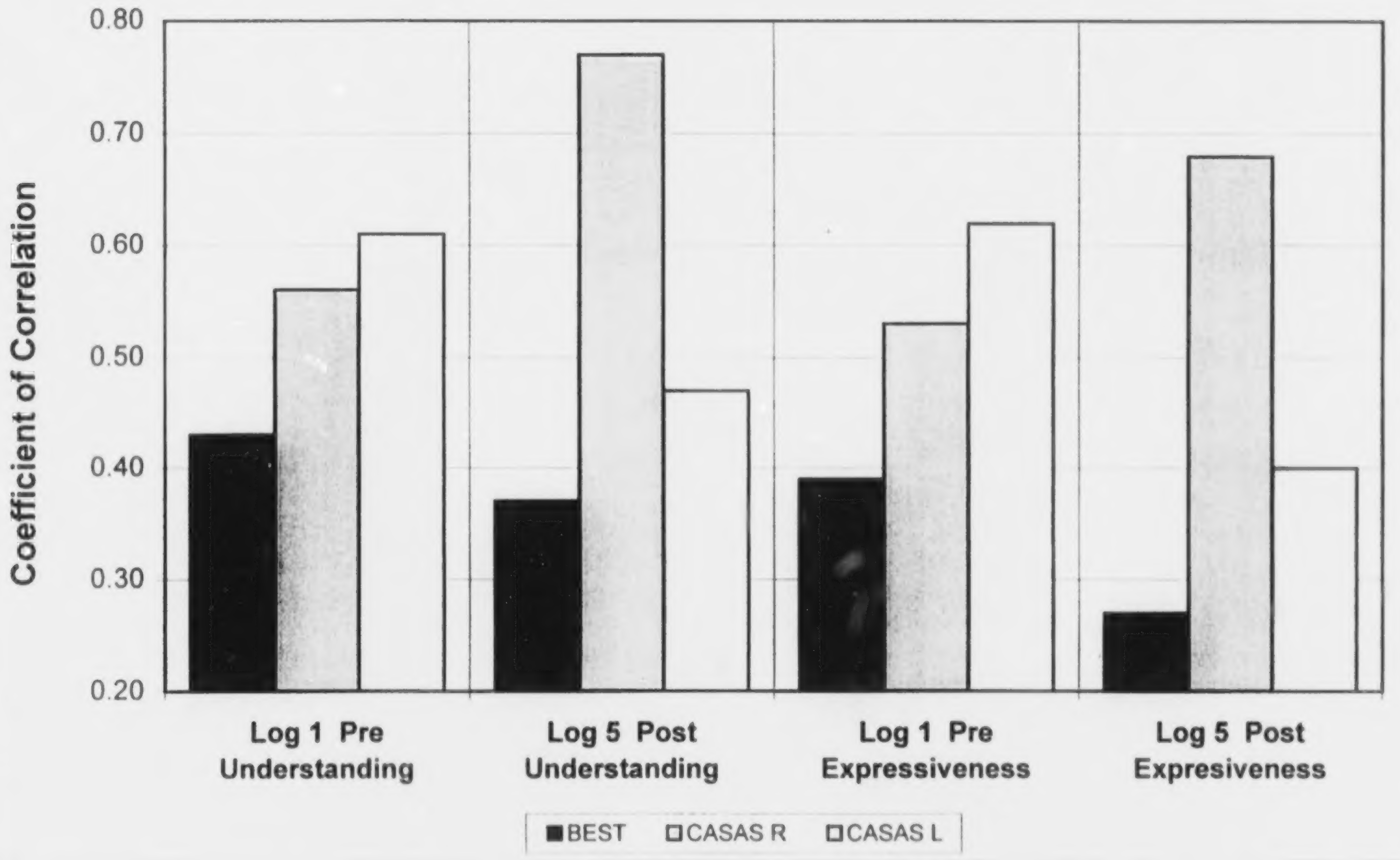


Figure 37
Unadjusted Mean Gains
Student Ratings of Telephone Comfort Level

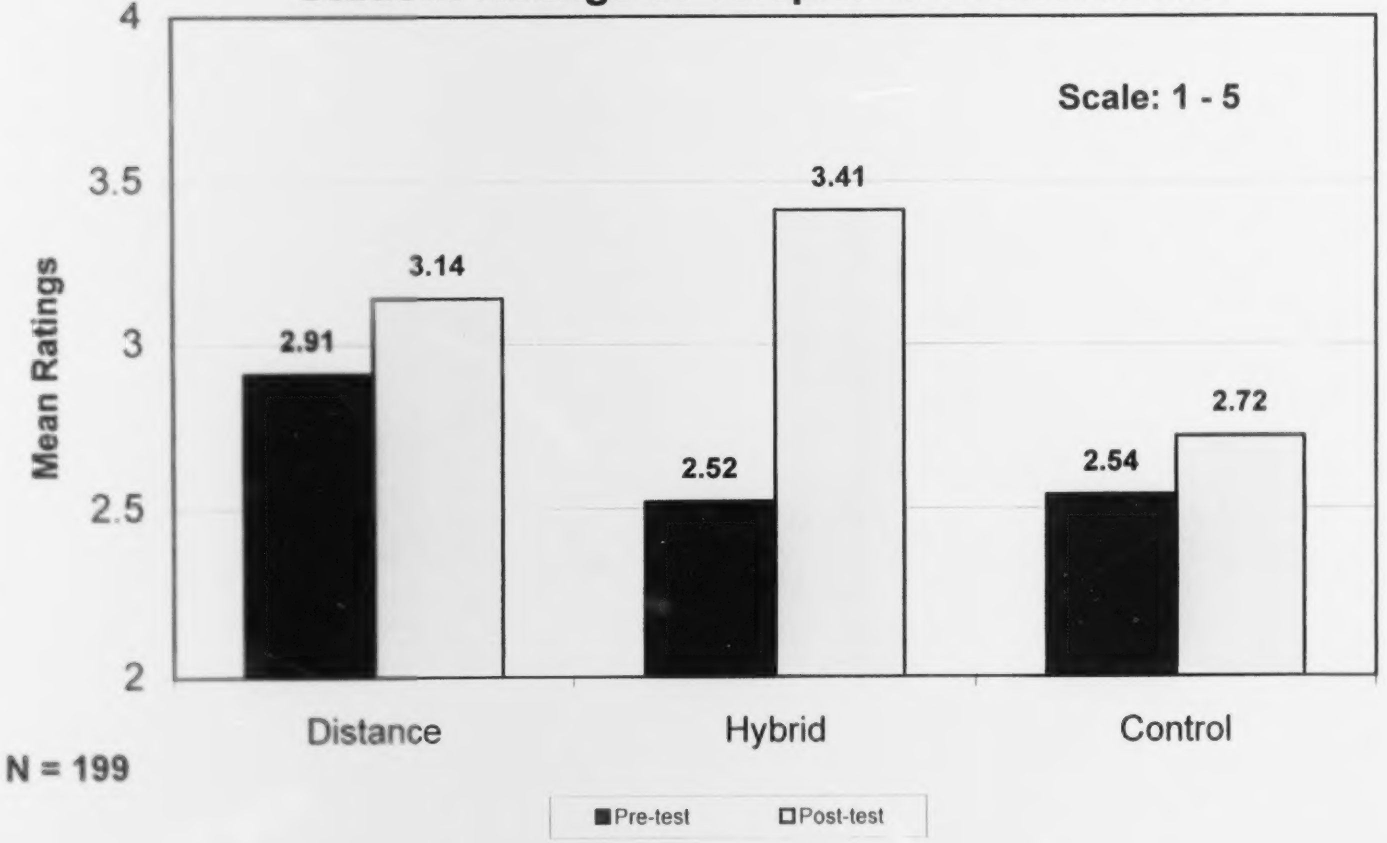


Figure 38
Unadjusted Mean Gains
Student Ratings of Radio/TV Listening Comfort

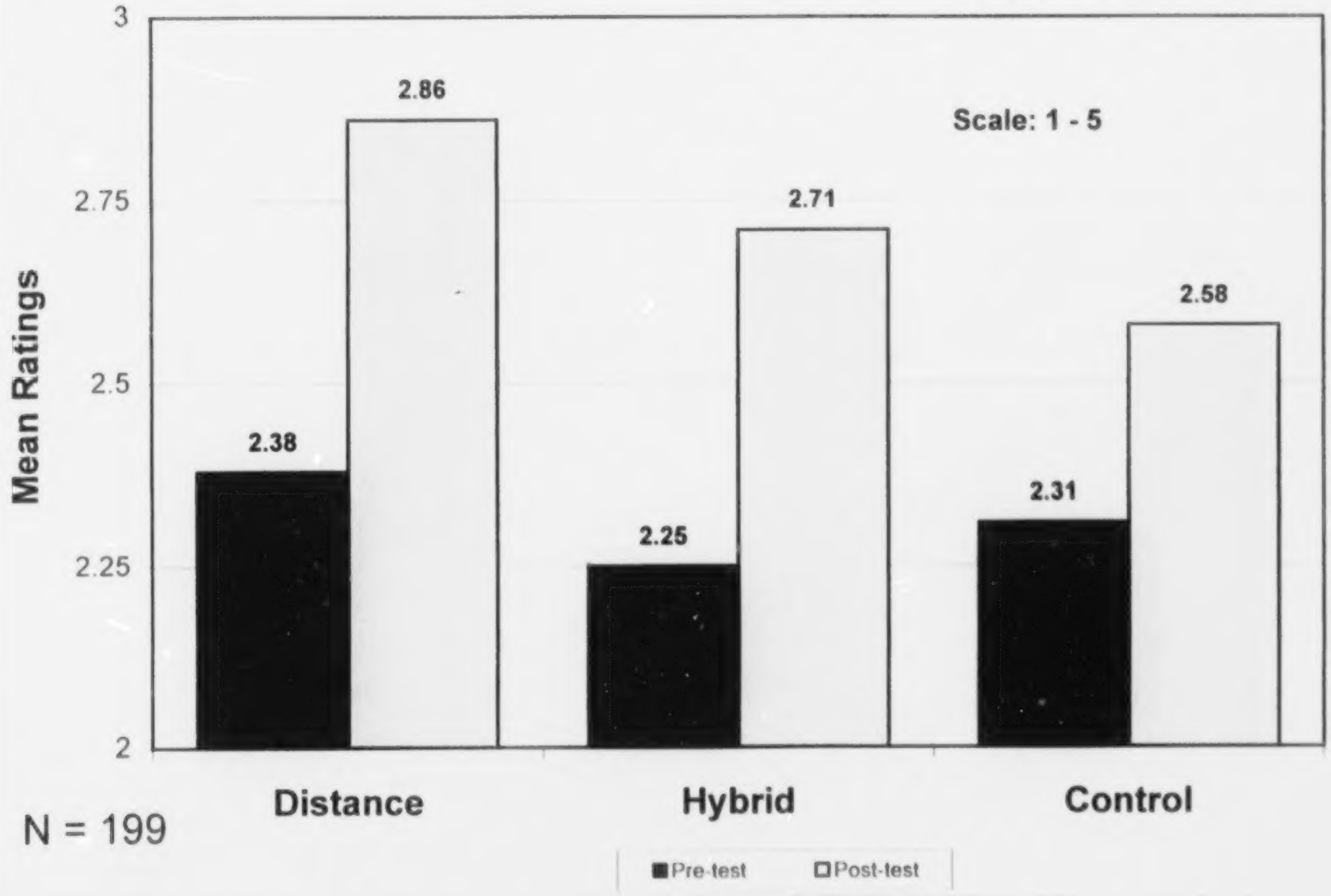


Figure 39

Post-Test Student Ratings of Confidence in English Usage

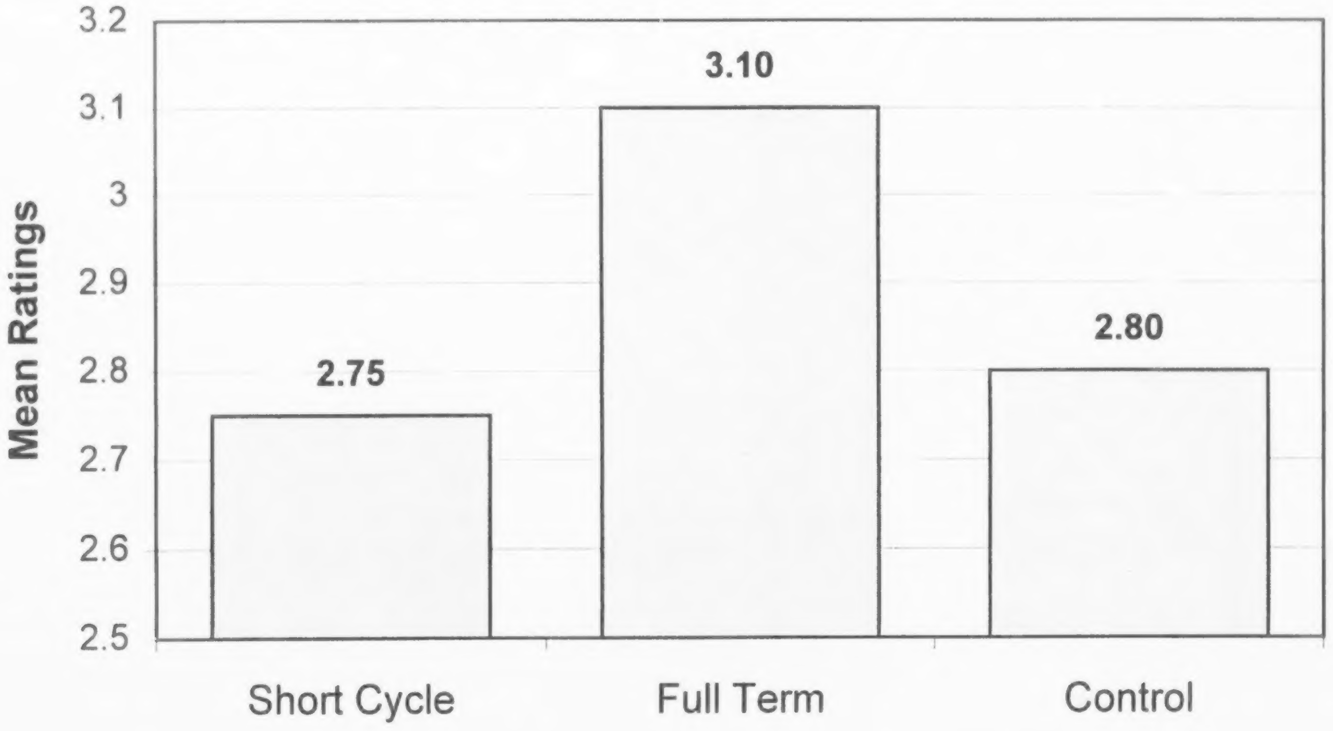


Figure 40
Students' Perceived Mean Gains in English Proficiency

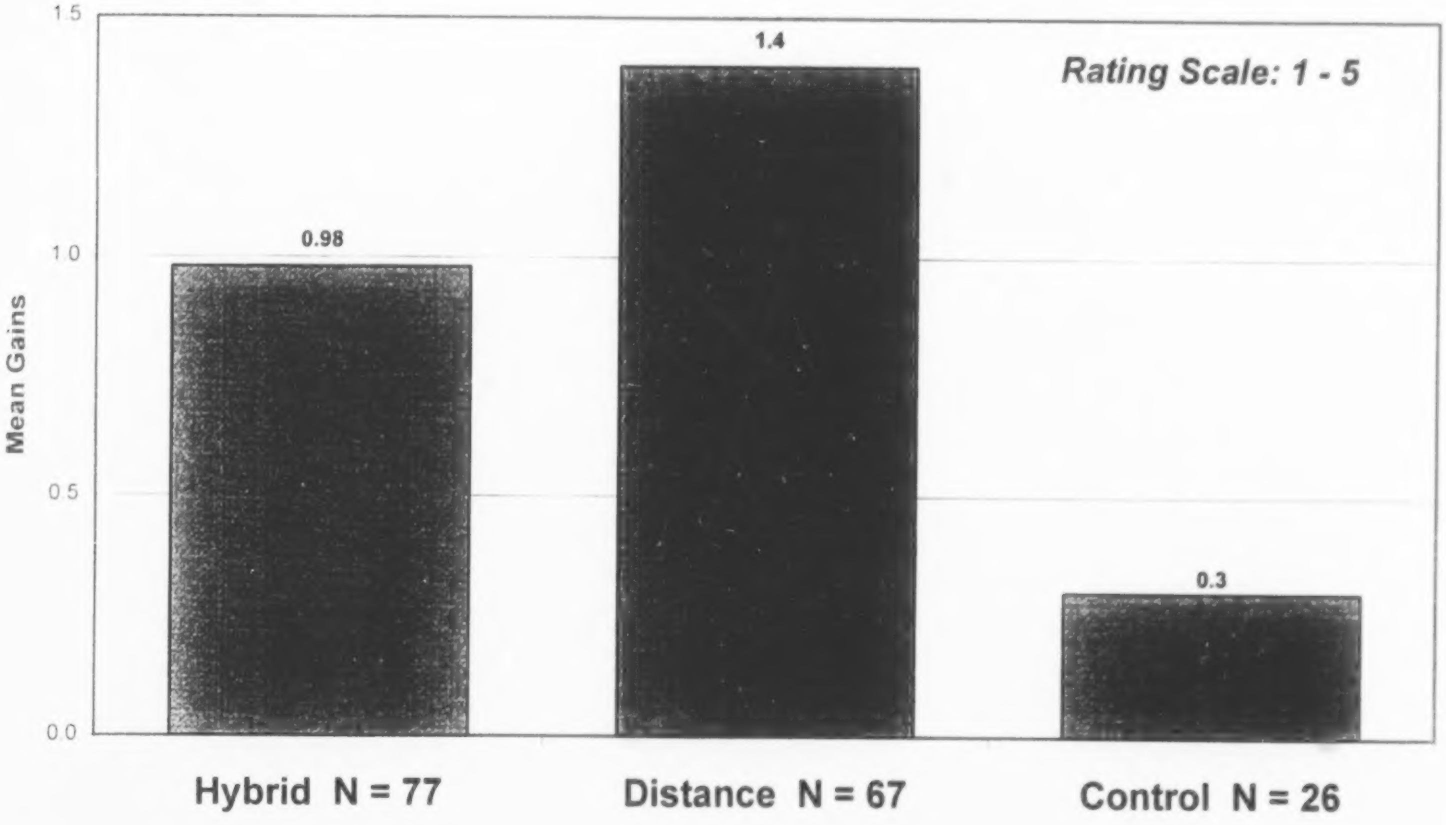
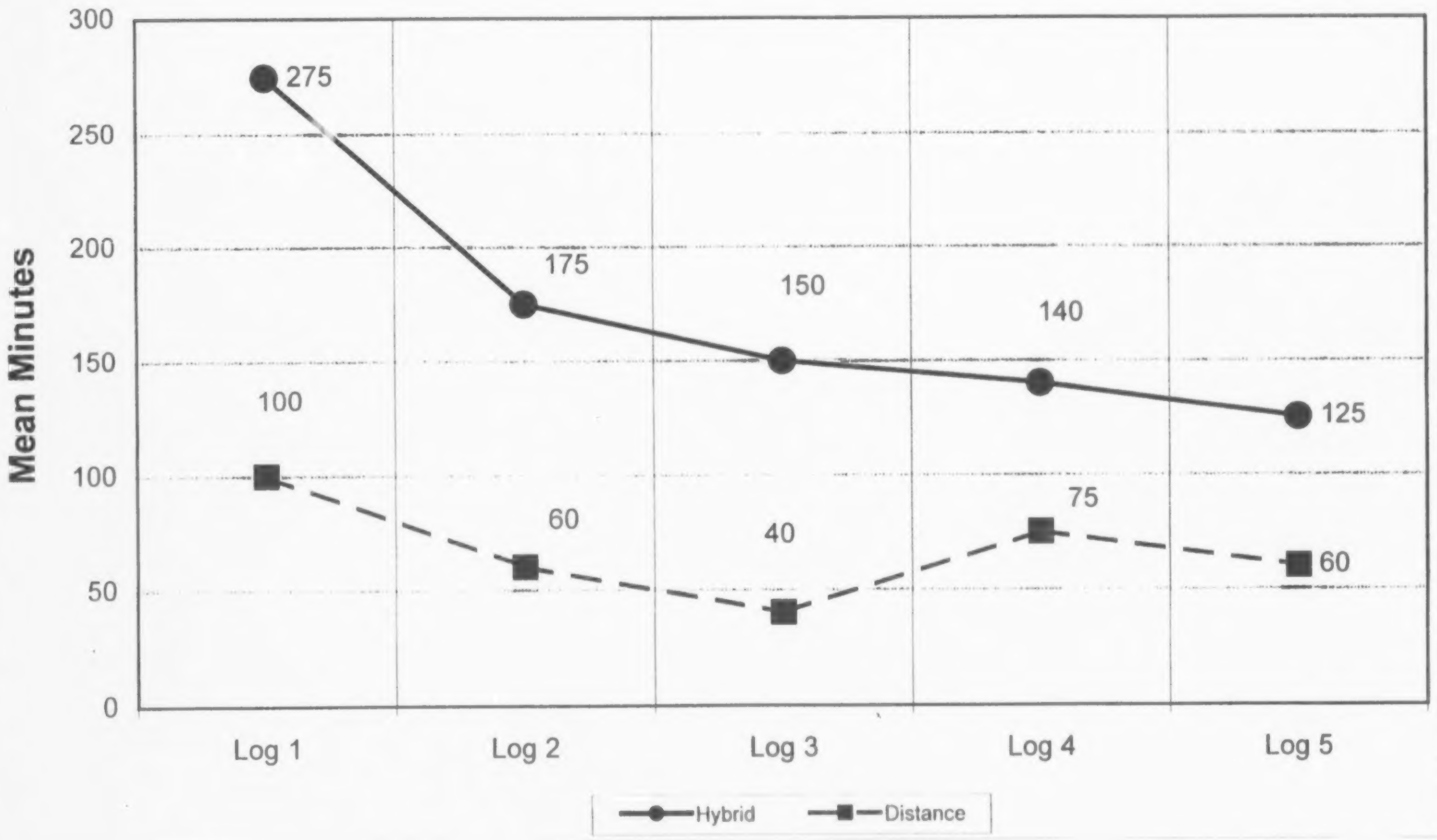


Figure 41
Mean Student Teacher Contact Minutes per Log



N = 195

Figure 42
Problems Interfering with Studying - All Students

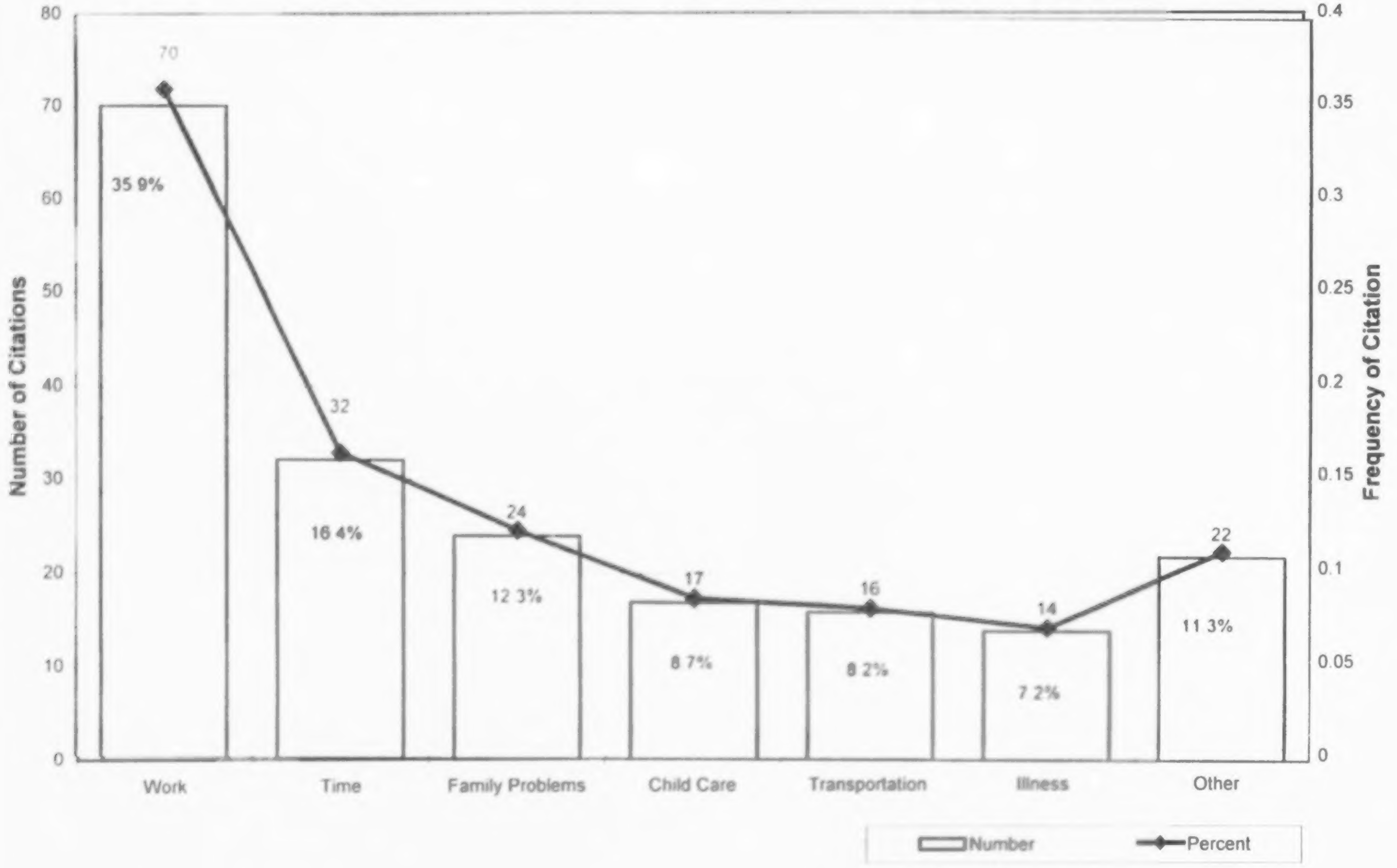


Figure 43
Percent of Students Reported Watching with Families by Log

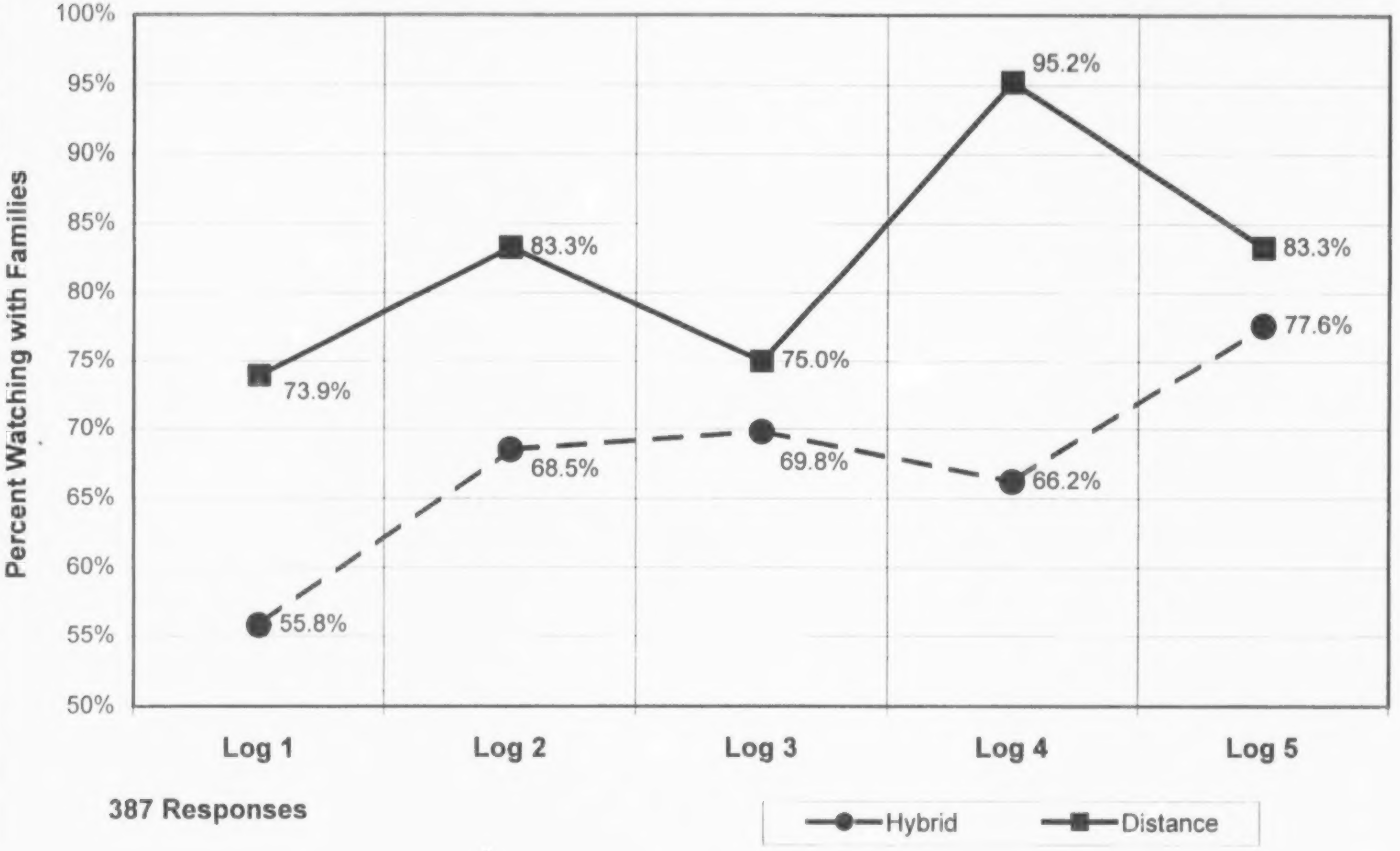


Figure 44
Total Responses All 5 Logs
Percent of Students Watching Videos with Families

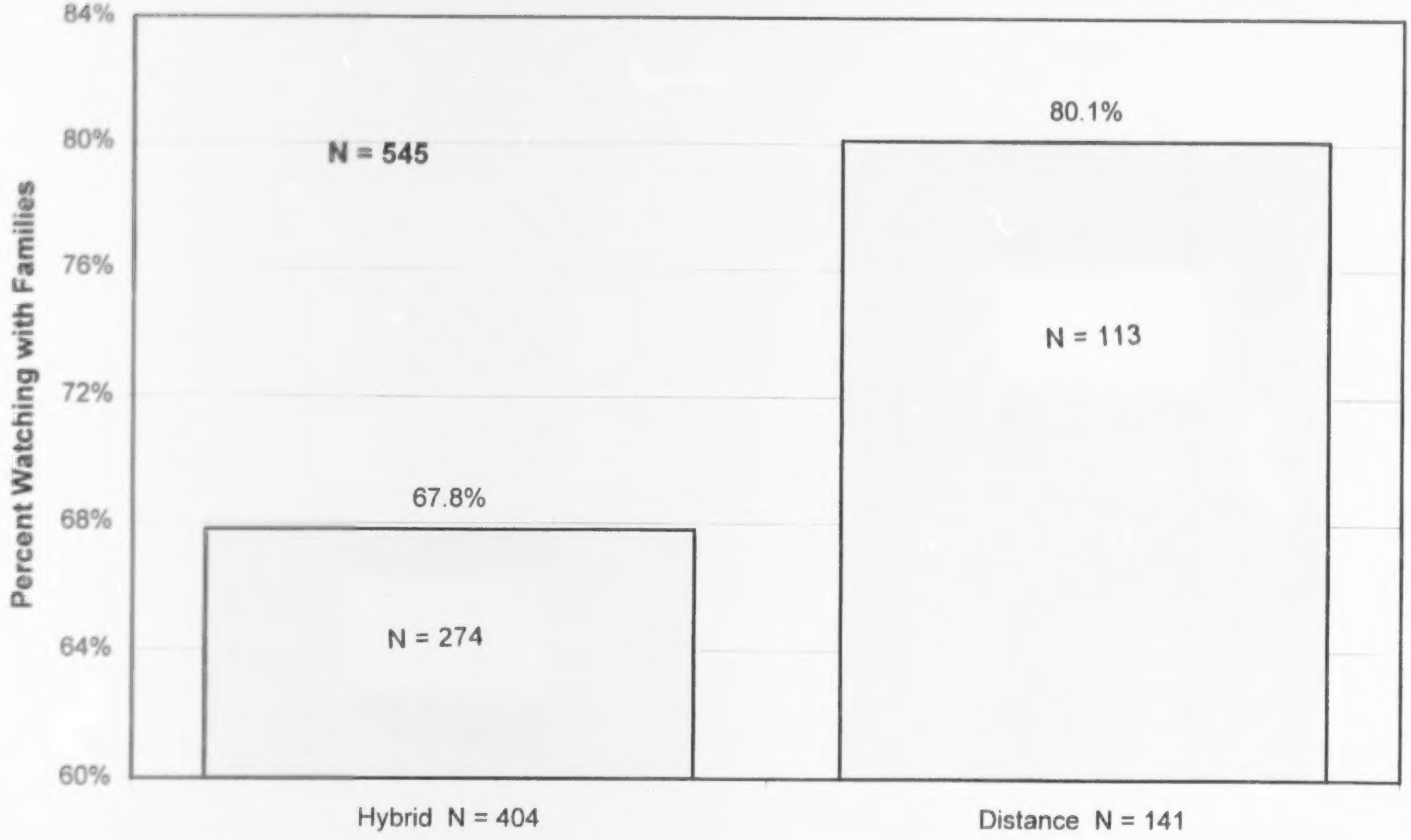


Figure 45
Partner Selection by Hybrid Students
258 Responses

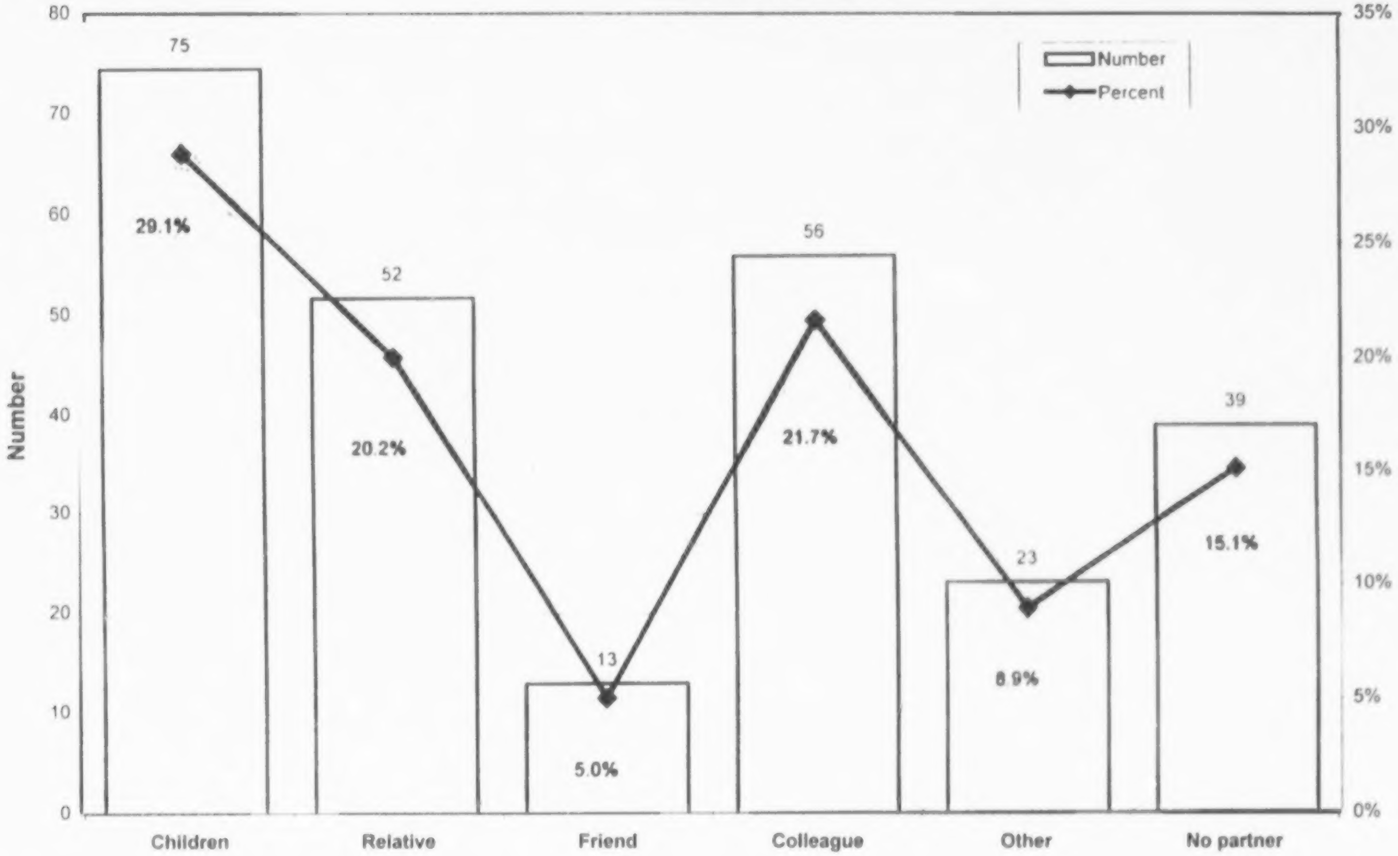


Figure 46
Partner Selection By Distance Learners
102 Responses

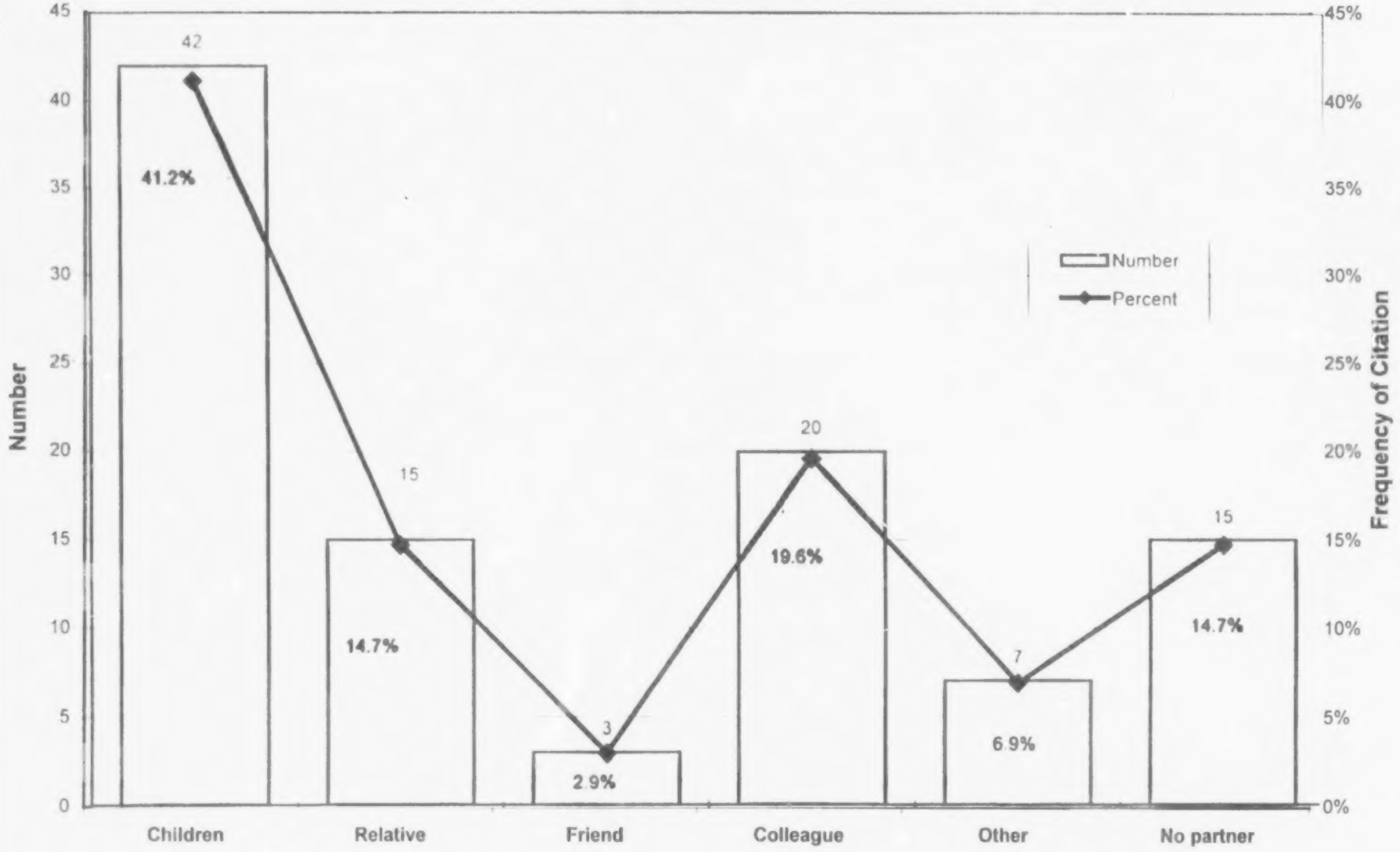
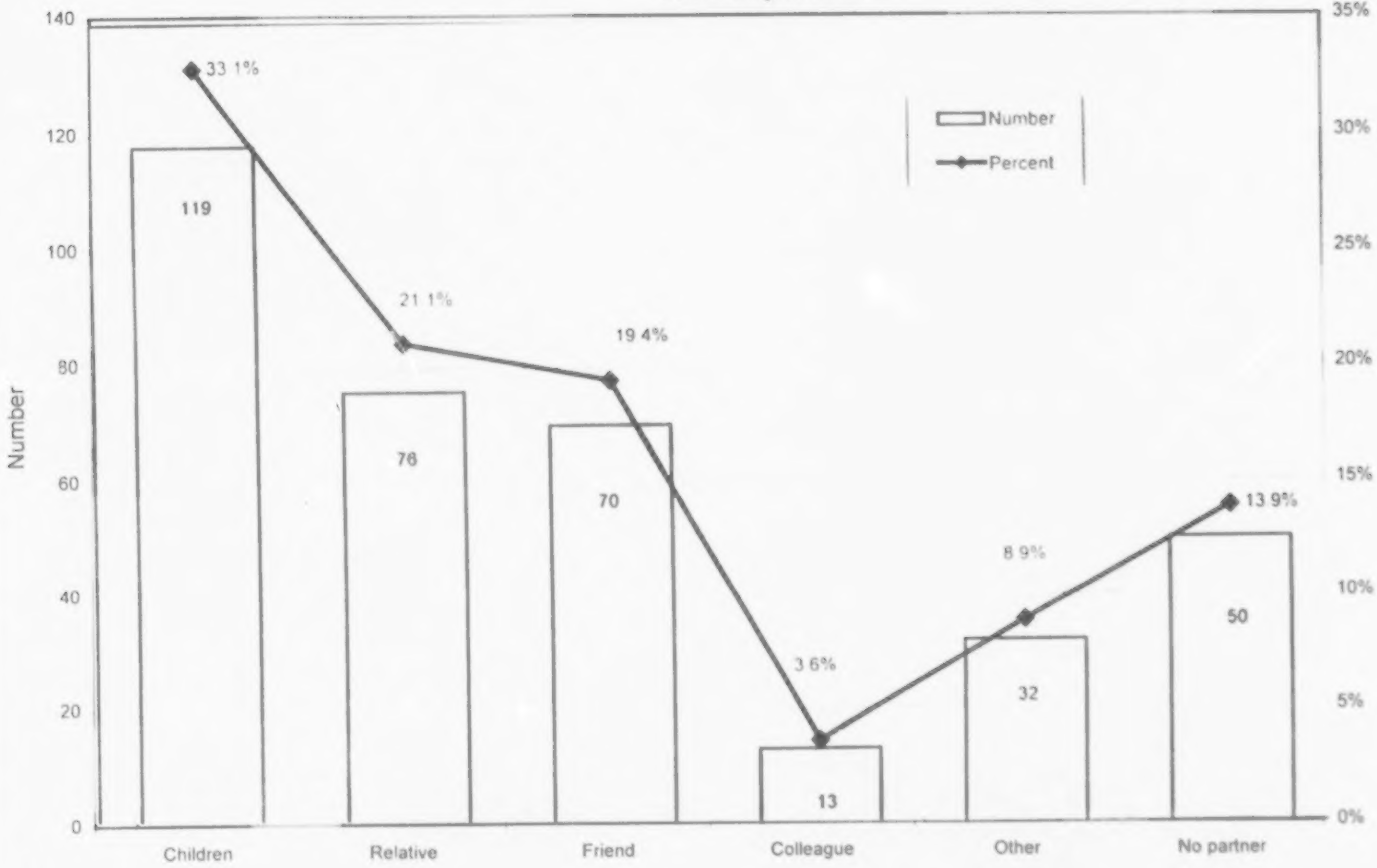


Figure 47
Choice of Partner -- All Students
360 Responses



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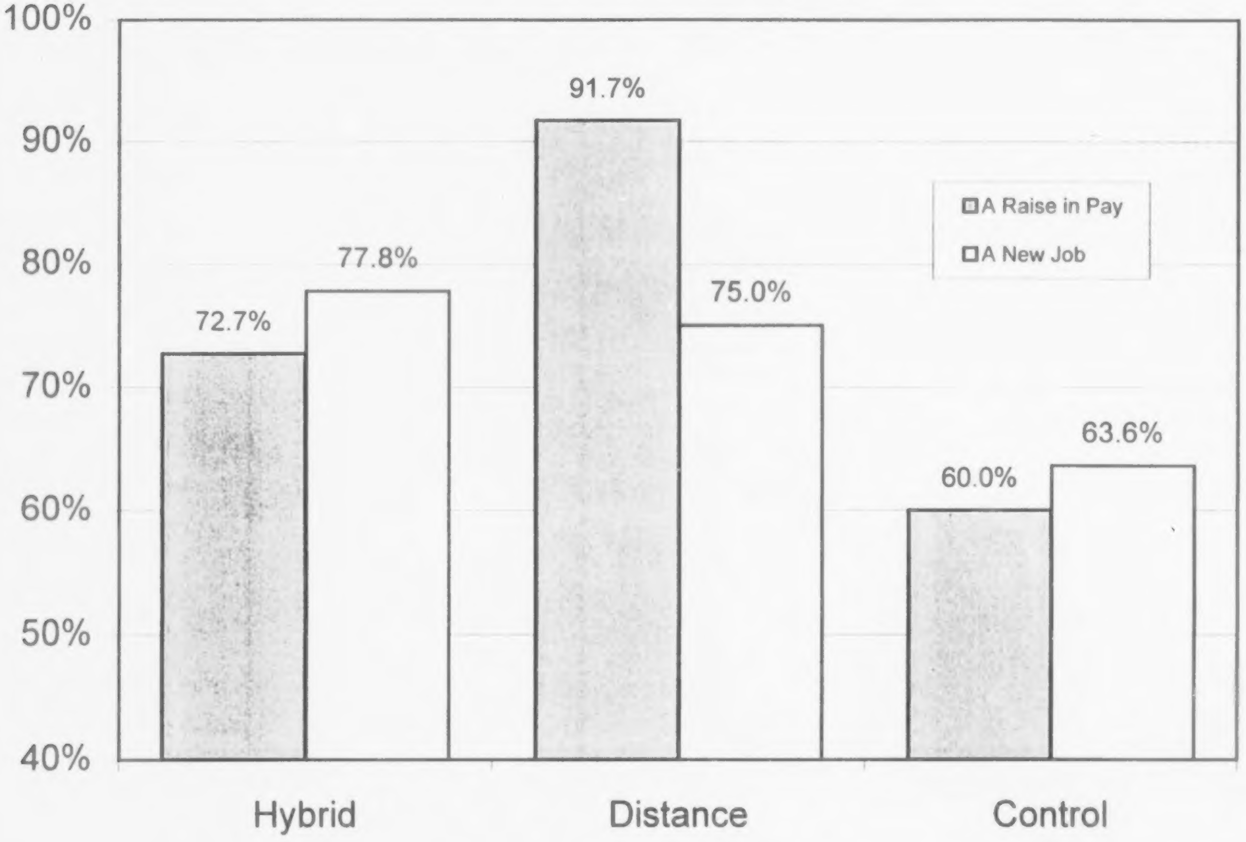

Figure 48
Employment Changes Attributed by Students to Improved English

N = 142
Employed

Crossroads Café Impact Evaluation Study

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Crossroads Café Impact Evaluation Study

Appendices

Protocol Professional Staff Training Meeting

Appendix A

February 9, 1998, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
CUNY Graduate Center, 33 West 42nd Street, Room 1810

Committee Members and Instructional Staff:

Please review all of the enclosed documents and forms prior to our training session.

Denny, Verna
Diones, Ruth
Flugman, Bert
Galek, Stan
Gonzalez, Pat Mooney
Headley-Walker, Linda
Miller, Bob
Miraflores, Nick
Mulé, Marcia
Siepel, Maria
Spiegel, Seymour
Torres, Beth
Uchitelle, Joan

As you can see, we have a very full agenda and will be pressed to get all on our agenda accomplished in one meeting. Lunch will be provided for all present and will be available at the Graduate School Commons on the 18th floor.

Attendees:

At least one teacher and administrator from each of the ten experimental sites will be in attendance. All present will receive a full set of texts and workbooks, *Crossroads Café* Video Unit 1, sample logs, sample testing materials, and a Protocol Manual.

Agenda:

1. Review the Impact Study plan and clarify the Research Questions.

2. Explain the established protocols that are to be followed in this study by all instructors.

   - Hybrid Model — See *Research Design*
     Issues that we will review are itemized on page 2.
   - Distance Model — See *Research Design*
     Issues that we will review are itemized on page 2 & 3.
   - Control Group — See *Research Design*
     Issues that we will review are itemized on page 1.

3. Review all of the following forms for content, formatting, ease of use, clarity, ambiguity. Drafts of all are enclosed in this package.

   - Initial *Crossroads Café* Student Information Form
   - Student Follow-up Information Form
   - Teacher Log Forms
   - Student Log Forms
   - Teacher's Background Information Form

4. General Issues to be reviewed and resolved

- Distribution of materials
- Return of forms — Fax vs pre-paid mailers
- Final site determination and selection of teachers
- Recruitment and selection of students
- Honoraria for teachers — differential based upon salaried or non-salaried personnel status
- Stipends for students — how much and how disbursed
- Toll free number for teacher support
- Sequential versus random selection of units to be completed by students
- Identification of the 5 units for Student and Teacher logs

5. Proposed Orientation Day agenda at each experimental site

- Introductory remarks by S. Spiegel and R. Diones
  - Overview of *Crossroads Café*
  - Explanation of study structure, purpose, method, groupings
- BEST testing and immediate scoring to select appropriate candidates
- Discharge and payment to students who score below level 3 and above level 6
- Fill out Student Background Information Forms with teacher assistance
- Teach students how to use *Crossroads Café* videos, texts, and other support materials
  - Teach students how to complete Student Logs
  - Distribute materials to students
  - View video #1
- Explain procedures for exchange of videos
- Announce date for post test

6. Teacher Training

- Ensure familiarity of teachers with *Crossroads Café*
- Thorough indoctrination in protocol and procedures
- Techniques for minimizing attrition in both hybrid & distance
- Tips for teachers using *Crossroads Café*
- Discuss student assessment methods in experimental situations
- Training teachers to use logs and information forms correctly
- Use of teacher support mechanisms throughout the study
- Selection of additional teacher trainers

At the training session, all teachers will receive :

- A full set of the 26 *Crossroads Café* videos,
- One copy each of *Worktext* A and B,
- One copy each of *Photo Stories* A and B,

  - One copy each of *Teachers Resource Books* A and B,
  - One copy of *The Partner Guide*,
  - One copy each of transcripts of the videos,
  - A copy of the Protocol Manual, and
  - A complete set of the data collection forms.

- Ruth Diones will provide an overview of the study.

- Marcia Mulé and Beth Torres will discuss the use the *Crossroads Café* materials.

- Maria Siepel and Joan Uchitelle will share tips on how to minimize attrition, anticipate problems, and suggest solutions for use with *Crossroads Café*. Other experienced teachers may also offer suggestions and ideas for teaching with *Crossroads Café*.

- The protocols will then be carefully reviewed and interest groups formed:

  - Marcia and Beth will lead the group planning to use the hybrid model;
  - Joan and Maria will lead the group planning to use the distance model;
  - Ruth will discuss the control group characteristics and procedures;
  - Ruth will discuss student recruitment, group assignment, student orientation.

- Ruth will introduce the logs and information forms. Teachers will learn how they should be filled out, distributed, and returned.

- Ruth will teach everyone how to administer and score the BEST test.

- Individual teachers will discuss their own immediate concerns and schedule both orientation dates at their sites.

- The *Crossroads Café* office "hotline" can be accessed from anywhere in New York State via the toll free # 1-800-472-7882.

7. Suggestions for conducting the Student Orientation session at each experimental site

- The site teacher will give the students an overview of *Crossroads Café*.

- Seymour will explain the study structure, purpose, methods, and stipends.

- The students will take the BEST test.

- Tests will be scored during the food break.

- Students scoring below Level III and above Level VI will be discharged. They may be referred to other more appropriate classes.
- Students will be randomly selected and assigned to a hybrid, a distance, or a control group from a single waiting list.
- The Student Background Information Forms will be filled in with teacher assistance.
- Control group students will attend separate orientation sessions, paid their stipend, told when to return for post-testing, and then excused.
- All control group members will be promised priority placement in regular *Crossroads Café* instructional situations upon completion of the experiment.
- The site teachers will introduce the distance and hybrid students to *Crossroads Café* materials.
- All materials will be distributed at no cost to the distance and hybrid students:
  - One copy of *Worktext*,
  - One copy of *Photo Stories*,
  - One copy of the *Partner Guide*,
  - One copy of video #1,
  - One or more additional video episodes for students to use next, as appropriate.
- The students will learn how to use the videos, the materials, and learn how to fill in the student logs.
- Everyone will view the first video and become familiar with all of the exercises in the *Worktext* and *Photo Stories* books.
- The use of the *Partner Guide* will also be explained and demonstrated.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Appendix B

The Research Design of the *Crossroads Café* Impact Study was approved by the Protocol and the Technical Committees meeting at CASE on February 9 and 18, 1998. Incorporating the suggestions of the Committee members, the Design has been re-structured to enhance its clarity and to minimize the number of uncontrolled variables among those conditions that may affect the study's outcomes. The protocols for conducting the research, training the teachers, and preparing the learners have been formulated with these goals in mind.

IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOLS

1. Recruitment

As customary, each site will seek enrollment through the use of newspapers, local cable, radio, churches, school districts, libraries, census map, agencies and so on.

2. Sampling

After initial screening to eliminate those who score too high or too low on the BEST, learners will be assigned to one of the experimental groups: distance learning, hybrid, or control.

3. Sites

Half of the students will be from in NYC sites and half from outside of NYC. Each site minimally will contribute students to one experimental group and to the control group. To be considered as a site, a minimum of 25 students at that site will be required. Hybrid and distance learning groups will be established both in New York City and at sites outside of New York City. Finally, the selection of agencies and learners will be governed by site location and by the willingness of agencies and teachers to participate within the constraints of the research design:

N's	New York City	Outside of NYC	Total
Hybrid	63	63	**126**
Distance	63	63	**126**
Control	63	63	**126**
Total	189	189	**378**

4. General Protocols and Procedures for All Conditions

- No students will have prior experience with *Crossroads Café*.
- Teachers, if at all possible, will have prior experience with *Crossroads Café*.
- Each teacher will supervise about 25 students.
- Teachers will keep a log on students' work. At the end of the study, teachers will also fill out a final evaluation form.
- The students will be assisted in filling out forms.
- The competency level necessary for inclusion in the program is a BEST score of Level III through Level VI.
- Control and experimental students will be randomly selected from a single waiting list.

5. Control Group Characteristics

- Participants will have had no exposure to *Crossroads Café* either before or during the experimental period.
- Participants will complete pre and post-tests and the Student Demographic Background Information Forms.
- No logs will be prepared by teachers or students.
- After testing, filling in the demographic forms, and receiving stipends, control group students will be briefed and excused.
- Control students should not currently be studying English in a classroom situation, and each student agrees not to enroll in a class until after the study ends.
- Control students to be gleaned from each site.
- Control group students will attend a separate orientation session.
- Control students will be sent mailings during the experimental period to sustain their interest in the study and reminded in advance of the post-test date.
- Control students will be paid at pre and post-testing.
- At post-testing students will receive a full set of the *Crossroads Café* materials as a gift and be granted priority admission to the next ESOL class.

6. Hybrid Group Characteristics

- Students will study, review, and use *Crossroads Café* videos and support materials at home. Students will have face-to-face contact with a teacher once a week to converse, discuss *Worktext* or *Photo Story* exercises, read aloud, work on pronunciation, talk about idioms, and write. Class will be primarily an oral interchange.

- As much as possible, students will meet in groups and work on the same units at the weekly sessions. If students have special needs or if they fall behind, teachers will work with them individually to help them catch up.

- Hybrid students will be pre and post-tested, will provide Demographic Information, and, at after the course, will also complete a final evaluation form anonymously.

- Students will attend the orientation session at which video #1 will be shown.

- Student Logs will be collected for 5 units:

    - The first student log will be collected when the student completes his/her 3rd unit. All students will work on the unit entitled, *Worlds Apart,* as his/her third unit of work. Because students work at various rates, students will be ready to start and to complete the 3rd unit at varying times.

    - The next student logs will be collected when students complete their 5th, 7th, and 10th units. As students may work on units in any order, video episode numbers will vary for these collection periods. Also, students will be ready to start these units at different times during the experimental period.

    - The final student log will be collected when a student completes his/her 12th unit of work. For the 12th unit, all students will work on the episode, *Turning Points.*

- Teachers will include the Student Log Sheets with the video tapes when the 5 video units identified below are distributed to the students.

- Students will return their completed logs in postage paid envelopes to the *Crossroads Café* office in NYC or the logs may returned to their teachers who will mail them to the NYC office.

- Teachers will complete a Teacher Log Form for each student following completion of the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 10th, and 12th units .

- Teachers will call or send letters to students who have been "no shows" for two consecutive weeks.

- Teachers and students will not use any supplemental materials except those provided by *Crossroads Café*.

- Teachers and students are encouraged to use all components of *Crossroads Café*, including the *Teacher's Resource Book*, the *Partner Guide*, the *Worktext*, *Photo Stories*, and the videos. *Crossroads Café* assessment materials are excluded.

- Students will be encouraged:
    - to meet with teachers one hour a week;
    - to work at all levels in the *Worktext*;
    - to watch the video as often as possible;
    - to schedule a time during their week to study;
    - to work with a partner; and
    - to watch the videos with their families.

- As part of the orientation session, students will be taught how to study using *Crossroads Café*. Teachers will reinforce these skills with the students in both distance and hybrid mode throughout the experimental period.

- A unit usually will be completed every two weeks; however, flexibility of the program will permit a student to proceed at his/her own pace.

- The students will be paid at pre and post-testing sessions and receive a set of the *Crossroads Café* materials at no charge.

7. Distance Learning Group Characteristics

- Students will study, review, and use *Crossroads Café* videos and support materials at home.

- Students will contact teachers only by telephone. Students may call instructors as often as they wish, but they are encouraged to call at least once a week.

- Teachers may phone their students as often as once a week, but should phone each at least once very two weeks.

- If students have not initiated contact for two consecutive weeks, teachers will phone or send letters to these students.

- The partner should assist the student as he/she works on the units.

- The partner is encouraged to be present during the student's phone sessions with the instructor.

- The students are pre and post-tested, provide Demographic Background Information, and, at the end of the course, complete a final evaluation form anonymously.

- Students will attend the orientation session at which video #1 will be shown.

- Student Logs will be collected for 5 units:

  - The first student log will be collected when the student completes his/her 3rd unit. All students will work on the unit entitled, *Worlds Apart*, as his/her third unit of work. Because students work at various rates, students will be ready to start and complete the 3rd unit at varying times.

  - The next student logs will be collected when students complete their 5th, 7th, and 10th units. As students may work on units in any order, video episode numbers will vary for these collection periods. Also, students will be ready to start these units at different times during the experimental period.

  - The final student log will be collected when a student completes his/her 12th unit of work. For the 12th unit, all students will work on the episode, *Turning Points*.

- Teachers will include the Student Log Sheets with the video tapes when the 5 video units identified above are distributed to the students.

- Students will return their completed logs in postage paid envelopes to the *Crossroads Café* office in NYC or the logs may returned to their teachers who will mail them to the NYC office.

- The teacher will complete a Teacher Log for each student after units 3 and 12 are completed and discussed.

- The teacher will also complete a Teacher Log for each student after the student completes his/her 5th, 7th, and 10th units (regardless of the actual unit studied).

- Teachers and students will not use any supplemental materials except those provided by *Crossroads Café*.

- As much as possible, teachers and students will use all components of *Crossroads Café*, including the *Teacher's Resource Book*, *Partner Guide*, *Worktext*, *Photo Stories*, and the videos. *Crossroads Café* assessment materials will be excluded.

- Students will be encouraged:

  - to watch the video as often as possible,
  - to schedule a time during their week to study,
  - to work at all levels in the *Worktext*,
  - to work with a partner, and
  - to watch the videos with their families.

- As part of the orientation session, students will be taught how to study using *Crossroads Café*. Teachers will reinforce these skills with both distance and hybrid mode students throughout the experimental period.

- A unit usually will be completed every two weeks; however, flexibility of the program will permit a student to proceed at his/her own pace.

- The students will be paid at pre and post-testing sessions and receive a set of the *Crossroads Café* materials at no charge.

- Voice mail will be installed for all distance learning teachers.

- A standardized letter will accompany each video tape as it is distributed to the student.

Descriptors

Proficient Skills
SPL 8** **Listening/Speaking**: Can participate effectively in social and familiar work situations; can understand and participate in practical and social conversations and in technical discussions in own field. **Reading/Writing:** Can handle most reading and writing tasks related to life roles; can read and interpret most non-simplified materials; can interpret routine charts, graphs, and labels; fill out medical information forms and job applications. **Employability**: Can meet work demands with confidence, interact with the public, and follow written instructions in work manuals.

Adult Secondary
SPL 7 **Listening/Speaking**: Can function independently in survival and social and work situations; can clarify general meaning and communicate on the telephone on familiar topics. **Reading/Writing**: Can read and interpret non-simplified materials on everyday subjects; can interpret routine charts, graphs, and labels; fill out medical information forms and job applications; and write an accident or incident report. **Employability**: Understands routine work-related conversations. Can handle work that involves following oral and simple written instructions and interact with the public. Can perform reading and writing tasks, such as most logs, reports, and forms, with reasonable accuracy to meet work needs.

Advanced ESL
SPL 6 **Listening/Speaking** : Can satisfy most survival needs and social demands. Has some ability to understand and communicate on the telephone on familiar topics. Can participate in conversations on a variety of topics. **Reading/Writing**: Can read and interpret simplified and some non-simplified materials on familiar topics. Can interpret simple charts, graphs, and labels; interpret a payroll stub; and complete a simple order form; fill out medical information forms and job applications. Can write short personal notes and letters **and make simple log entries.** **Employability**: Can handle jobs and job training situations that involve following oral **and simple** written instructions and **multi-step** diagrams and limited public contact. **Can read a simple employee handbook.**

Persons at the upper end of this score range are able to begin GED preparation.

High Intermediate ESL
SPL 5 **Listening/Speaking**: Can satisfy basic survival needs and limited social demands; can follow oral directions in familiar contexts. Has limited ability to understand on the telephone. Understands learned phrases easily and new phrases containing familiar vocabulary. **Reading/Writing**: Can read and interpret simplified and some authentic material on familiar subjects. Can write messages or notes related to basic needs. Can fill out basic medical forms and job applications. **Employability**: Can handle jobs and/or training that involve following basic oral and written instructions and diagrams if they can be clarified orally.

Low Intermediate ESL
SPL 4 **Listening/Speaking**: Can satisfy basic survival needs and very routine social demands. Understands simple learned phrases easily and some new simple phrases containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with frequent repetition. **Reading/Writing**: Can read and interpret simple material on familiar topics. Able to read and interpret simple directions, schedules, signs, maps, and menus. Can fill out forms requiring basic personal information and write short, simple notes and messages based on familiar situations. **Employability**: Can handle entry-level jobs that involve some simple oral **and written** communication but in which tasks can also be demonstrated and/or clarified orally.

High Beginning ESL
SPL 3 **Listening/Speaking**: Functions with some difficulty in situations related to immediate needs; may have some simple oral communication abilities using basic learned phrases and sentences. **Reading/Writing**: Reads and writes letters and numbers and a limited number of basic sight words and simple phrases related to immediate needs. Can write basic personal information on simplified forms. **Employability**: Can handle routine entry-level jobs that involve only the most basic oral or **written** communication in English and in which all tasks can be demonstrated.

Low Beginning ESL
SPL 2 **Listening/Speaking**: Functions in a very limited way in situations related to immediate needs; asks and responds to basic learned phrases spoken slowly and repeated often. **Reading/Writing**: Recognizes and writes letters and numbers and reads and understands common sight words. Can write own name and address. **Employability**: Can handle only routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral **or written** communication in English and in which all tasks are easily demonstrated.

Pre-Beginning ESL
SPL 0-1 **Listening/Speaking**: Functions minimally, if at all, in English. Communicates only through gestures and a few isolated words. **Reading/Writing**: **May not be** literate in any language. **Employability**: Can handle very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English are easily demonstrated. Employment choices would be extremely limited.

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Initial Student Background Information

Student ID Number

Dear Student,

We would like to know more about students participating in *Crossroads Cafe*. Please answer the questions below. Write slowly and carefully in capital letters with letters not touching the boxes, and fill in ovals completely. Thank you for your cooperation.

First Name **I.** **Last Name**

Number & Street Address

City **State** **Zip Code** -

How long have you lived at this address? **Years** **Months**

Date of Birth: / /

Month **Day** **Year**

Site

- ○ Southern Westchester BOCES
- ○ Long Beach
- ○ Frontier Central
- ○ Rush Henrietta
- ○ Shorefront YM-YWHA
- ○ Highbridge Community Life Center
- ○ Chinatown Manpower
- ○ Bronx Educational Services
- ○ Father Billini
- ○ Flatbush Haitian Center

Personal

1) Are you male or female? ○ Male ○ Female

2) In which country were you born?

47571

sibi 2

Student ID Number ☐☐☐

3) What is your first language? (mother tongue) ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

a) Can you read in that language? ○ Yes ○ No

b) Can you write in that language? ○ Yes ○ No

4) How many years of school did you complete? ☐☐

5) Do you have any chidren living with you under the age of 18? ○ Yes ○ No

6) Are your parents, in-laws or any other adult relatives living with you? ○ Yes ○ No

7) How long have you lived in the United States? **Years** ☐☐ **Months** ☐☐

Employment

1) Do you have a paying job? ○ Yes ○ No

2) If so, how many hours do you work each week? ☐☐

3) How long have you had this job? **Years** ☐☐ **Months** ☐☐

English Background

1) What have you done to learn English in the past? (Please fill in as many ovals as apply.)

- ○ Studied English using Crossroads Cafe.
- ○ Attended English-language classes.
- ○ Studied English-language textbooks at home.
- ○ Listened to English-language television or radio.
- ○ Read English-language newspapers or books.
- ○ Spoke English with people.

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Student ID Number ☐☐☐

2) Why do you want to study English now? (Please fill in as many ovals as apply.)

○ To become a citizen of the United States of America.

○ To be able to make more money.

○ To understand my children when they speak English.

○ To be able to help my children more.

○ To be better able to do everyday activities in my neighborhood (For example, to shop.)

○ To get my Graduate Equivalency Degree.

○ To be able to study for a degree other than GED.

○ Other (Please specify.) ☐

3) What are you doing now to learn English? (Please fill in as many ovals as apply.)

○ Studying or watching Crossroads Cafe.

○ Attending English-language classes.

○ Studying English-language textbooks at home.

○ Listening to English-language television or radio.

○ Reading English-language newspapers or books.

○ Speaking English with people.

4) Approximately, how many hours of the day do you have to speak English (For example, at work or when shopping?) ☐☐

5) Do you live in a community where you could get by without speaking English?

○ Yes

○ No

6) Approximately, how many days a week do you read an English language newspaper? ☐

7) How comfortable are you speaking on the telephone in English? (Please fill in one oval.)

○ very uncomfortable

○ uncomfortable

○ somewhat comfortable

○ comfortable

○ very comfortable

○ I do not speak English on the telephone.

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Student ID Number

8) How much do you understand when you listen to English language radio?
(Please fill in one oval.)

○ **very little**
○ **a little**
○ **some**
○ **most**
○ **all**
○ **I do not listen to English language radio.**

9) How much do you understand when you watch English language television?
(Please fill in one oval.)

○ **very little**
○ **a little**
○ **some**
○ **most**
○ **all**
○ **I do not watch English language television.**

10) How confident do you feel when you need to use your English language skills?
(Please fill in one oval.)

○ **not confident at all**
○ **not confident**
○ **somewhat confident**
○ **confident**
○ **very confident**

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Follow-up Student Background Information

Student ID Number ☐☐☐

Dear Student,

We would like to know how *Crossroads Cafe* has affected your life. Please answer the questions below. Write slowly and carefully in capital letters with letters not touching the boxes, and fill in ovals completely. Thank you for your cooperation.

First Name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ **I.** ☐ **Last Name** ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Number & Street Address ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

City ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ **State** ☐☐ **Zip Code** ☐☐☐☐☐ - ☐☐☐☐

How long have you lived at this address? **Years** ☐☐ **Months** ☐☐

Date of Birth: ☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐
Month **Day** **Year**

Site

- ○ Southern Westchester BOCES
- ○ Long Beach
- ○ Frontier Central
- ○ Rush Henrietta
- ○ Shorefront YM-YWHA
- ○ Highbridge Community Life Center
- ○ Chinatown Manpower
- ○ Bronx Educational Services
- ○ Father Billini
- ○ Flatbush Haitian Center

Teacher's Last Name: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Employment

1) Do you have a paying job? ○ Yes ○ No

2) If so, how many hours do you work each week? **Hours** ☐☐

3) How long have you had this job? **Years** ☐☐ **Months** ☐☐

747

sfbi 2

Student ID Number

4) In the last 6 months, did you get a raise or promotion? ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, do you think you got the raise or promotion because of your improved English language skills? ○ Yes ○ No

5) In the last 6 months, did you get a new job? ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, do you think this is a better job for you? ○ Yes ○ No

Do you think you got the new job because of your improved English language skills? ○ Yes ○ No

English Background

1) What have you done to learn English in the past 26 weeks? (Please fill in as many ovals as apply.)

- ○ Studied or watched Crossroads Cafe.
- ○ Attended English-language classes.
- ○ Studied English-language textbooks at home.
- ○ Listened to English-language television or radio.
- ○ Read English-language newspapers or books.
- ○ Spoke English with people.

2) How comfortable are you speaking on the telephone in English? (Please fill in one oval.)

- ○ very uncomfortable
- ○ uncomfortable
- ○ somewhat comfortable
- ○ comfortable
- ○ very comfortable
- ○ I do not speak English on the telephone.

747

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sfbi 3

Student ID Number

3) How much do you understand when you listen to English language radio? (Please fill in one oval.)

○ **very little**
○ **a little**
○ **some**
○ **most**
○ **all**
○ **I do not listen to English language radio.**

4) How much do you understand when you watch English language television? (Please fill in one oval.)

○ **very little**
○ **a little**
○ **some**
○ **most**
○ **all**
○ **I do not watch English language television.**

5) How much do you believe your English language skills improved after taking Crossroads Cafe? (Please fill in one oval.)

○ **Very Little**
○ **Somewhat**
○ **Some**
○ **A Fair Amount**
○ **A Lot**

6) How confident do you feel when you need to use your English language skills? (Please fill in one oval.)

○ **not confident at all**
○ **not confident**
○ **somewhat confident**
○ **confident**
○ **very confident**

7) Do you intend to continue studying English?
○ **Yes**
○ **No**

747

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Third Unit Studied

Teacher Log 1

Student ID Number

First Name **I.** **Last Name**

(Area Code) Telephone Number

( ) -

Site

- ○ Southern Westchester BOCES
- ○ Long Beach
- ○ Frontier Central
- ○ Rush Henrietta
- ○ Shorefront YM-YWHA
- ○ Highbridge Community Life Center
- ○ Chinatown Manpower
- ○ Bronx Educational Services
- ○ Father Billini
- ○ Flatbush Haitian Center

Student Name

First Name **Last Name**

Please record here the date, unit # and amount of time you have spoken with your students about the first, second and third units studied.

Unit #:	**Date of contact:**	**Total time in minutes**
	/ / Month Day Year	
	/ / Month Day Year	
	/ / Month Day Year	
	/ / Month Day Year	
	/ / Month Day Year	
	/ / Month Day Year	

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Unit #: 0 3

Student ID Number

tl1 2

Please rate the student using the scales following the question. If you have any comments, write them in the rectangles provided below each question.

The Video (Fill in oval of best description).

Rate the student's general understanding of this video. The scale goes from 1 to 5, where 1=Hardly any 3=Fair understanding 5=Excellent understanding.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

comments (optional)

Rate how well the student was able to communicate verbally his/her general understanding. 1=Hardly at all 3=Fair verbal expression 5= excellent verbal expression

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

comments (optional)

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33062

Student ID Number

tt1 3

While studying this unit, did the students report any problems that interfered with studying *Crossroads Cafe*? (Please fill in as many ovals as apply.)

○ **Illness in the family**
○ **Work**
○ **Transportation**
○ **Time obligations**
○ **Lack of interest**
○ **Depression**
○ **Family problems**
○ **Child care**
○ **Other (please detail.)**

comments (optional)

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33062

Student Log 1

Student ID Number ☐☐☐

Dear Student,

This student log is designed to help you record the amount of time you have worked with Crossroads Café unit #3, *Worlds Apart.* Each day, please write down the approximate amount of time you watched the video, studied the *Worktext* and/or *Photo Story* and worked with a partner. Also, as you work on this unit, please count the number of times you watch the video. After you have finished this unit, answer the questions on page 4 and then mail the completed form in the pre-paid envelope provided. If necessary, you can return this log sheet to your teacher. Thank you for your cooperation.

First Name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ **I.** ☐ **Last Name** ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

(Area Code) Telephone Number (☐☐☐) ☐☐☐-☐☐☐☐

Teacher's Last Name: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Site

- ○ Southern Westchester BOCES
- ○ Long Beach
- ○ Frontier Central
- ○ Rush Henrietta
- ○ Shorefront YM-YWHA
- ○ Highbridge Community Life Center
- ○ Chinatown Manpower
- ○ Bronx Educational Services
- ○ Father Billini
- ○ Flatbush Haitian Center

Unit Number: 03

Date of Birth: ☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐
Month Day Year

Dates that you worked on unit #3: ☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐
Month Day Year

Time working on Crossroads Cafe:

video hours ☐☐ and minutes ☐☐
Worktext & Photo Story hours ☐☐ and minutes ☐☐
work with partner hours ☐☐ and minutes ☐☐

☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐
Month Day Year

video hours ☐☐ and minutes ☐☐
Worktext & Photo story hours ☐☐ and minutes ☐☐
work with partner hours ☐☐ and minutes ☐☐

25866

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Student ID Number
st1 2

Dates that you worked on unit #3:

Time working on Crossroads Cafe:

/ /
Month **Day** **Year**

video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

/ /
Month **Day** **Year**

video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

/ /
Month **Day** **Year**

video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

/ /
Month **Day** **Year**

video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

/ /
Month **Day** **Year**

video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

25866

Student ID Number
sl1 3

Time working on Crossroads Cafe:

Dates that you worked on unit #3:

Month / **Day** / **Year**
video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

Month / **Day** / **Year**
video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

Month / **Day** / **Year**
video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

Month / **Day** / **Year**
video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

Month / **Day** / **Year**
video hours **and minutes**
Worktext & Photo Story hours **and minutes**
work with partner hours **and minutes**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Student ID Number ☐☐☐
sl1 4

Dates that you worked on Unit #3:

Time working on Crossroads Cafe:

☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐
Month **Day** **Year**

video hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐
Worktext & Photo Story hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐
work with partner hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐

☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐
Month **Day** **Year**

video hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐
Worktext & Photo Story hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐
work with partner hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐

☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐
Month **Day** **Year**

video hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐
Worktext & Photo Story hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐
work with partner hours ☐☐ **and minutes** ☐☐

Please answer the following questions:

1) Did you watch the video with your family? ○ **Yes**
○ **No**

2) Who was your partner this week? (Please fill in as many ovals as apply.)

○ **One of my children**
○ **A friend or neighbor**
○ **A work colleague**
○ **A relative (e.g. brother, aunt,...)**
○ **Other (Please specify.)** ☐
○ **I did not work with a partner this week**

3) How many times did you watch the complete video? ☐☐

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Teacher Background Information

First Name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ I. ☐ Last Name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Number & Street Address ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

City ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ State ☐☐ Zip Code ☐☐☐☐☐ - ☐☐☐☐

(Area Code) Telephone Number (☐☐☐) ☐☐☐-☐☐☐☐

Site
- ○ Mt Vernon
- ○ Long Beach
- ○ Frontier
- ○ Rush Henrietta
- ○ Shorefront Y
- ○ Highbridge
- ○ Chinatown Manpower
- ○ Flatbush Haitian
- ○ ELESAIR
- ○ Bronx Educational Services

1) ○ Male
○ Female

2) Can you converse in a language other than English? ○ Yes ○ No

3) How many years of experience have you had teaching English to speakers of other languages? Years ☐☐

4) How long have you taught using *Crossroads Cafe*? Years ☐☐ Months ☐☐

5) Have you taught Crossroads Cafe as a distance learning course? ○ Yes ○ No

6) Have you taught Crossroads Cafe as a "hybrid" learning course? ○ Yes ○ No

7) On the average, when you teach using Crossroads Cafe, how many students do you work with at the same time? ☐☐

8) Approximately, how many of hours of training have you received in teaching Crossroads Cafe? ☐☐

Draft

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